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Civilian Power Status Questioned: The Curious Case of Post-Unification German Foreign Policy Toward Iran

Stowe Andrew Kintzinger

A thesis submitted for the degree of:
Doctor of Philosophy

School of Government and International Affairs,
Durham University

2019



Abstract

Civilian Power Status Questioned: The Curious Case of Post-Unification German Foreign Policy Toward Iran

By approaching post-unification German foreign policy toward Iran from an original, *civilian power* perspective, this thesis not only offers a new way of explaining the relationship, but considers, for the first time, the wider implications of this relationship for prevailing understandings of German foreign policy and interest.

Despite concern that with unification, Germany would return to rationalist and materialist aims in its foreign policy, instead, the prevailing characterisation remains one of ostensible continuity as a civilian power. Notwithstanding the prevalence of this explanation, existing literature has advanced a fundamental question regarding the extent to which Germany remains a civilian power, or is, in fact, pursuing an increasingly normalised approach to foreign policy. In this manner, case studies of German foreign policy, identity, and interest, capable of addressing this issue, are of particular value.

Although German foreign policy towards Iran is prominent, it remains greatly under-evaluated, and has never been substantively addressed from any theoretical or analytical perspective, despite appearing to challenge civilian power understandings of Germany's foreign policy and interest.

In approaching this case from a civilian power perspective, this thesis not only advances a new way of understanding Germany's relationship with Iran, but critically, it considers the extent to which this relationship may, in fact, problematize wider, prevailing understandings, of post-unification German foreign policy, identity, and interest, as a civilian power.

Ultimately, by addressing Germany's relationship with Iran from this new perspective, this thesis makes an original and significant contribution to knowledge, by demonstrating that contrary to prevailing, civilian power explanations, Germany's foreign policy towards Iran is primarily explained by economic interests, albeit with a crucial, civilian power contingency, to ensure diplomatic solutions to conflict and avoidance of using force.

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List of Abbreviations

CDU	Christian Democratic Union of Germany
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
DM	Deutsche Mark
EP	European Parliament
E.U.	European Union
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
ILSA	Iran and Libya Sanctions Act
INSTEX	Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
KDPI	Kurdistan Party of Iran
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NATO	The North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
OPEC	The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
SPD	Social Democratic Party of Germany
TCA	Trade and Cooperation Agreement
U.N.	United Nations
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
U.S.	United States of America
WMD	Weapon of Mass Destruction
WTO	World Trade Organization

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Introduction

Despite palpable concern that with unification, Germany would return to rationalist and materialist aims in foreign policy,¹ instead, the prevailing characterisation remains one of ostensible *continuity*² as a *civilian power*.³ According to such an understanding, traditional, rationalist and materialist interest is eschewed, and identity-based interest formation occurs.⁴ In this manner, the prevalence of such an explanation of post-unification Germany, means case studies appearing to challenge this understanding of its foreign policy, and interest, are of profound implication to academics and policymakers alike. One such case in particular, although prominent, and appearing to challenge prevailing, civilian power understandings of Germany's foreign policy and interest, remains greatly under-evaluated. This is the case of post-unification German foreign policy towards Iran.

For one school of thought, mirroring a constructivist explanation of the relationship, Germany's foreign policy towards Iran is an apotheosis of European multilateralism and cooperation,⁵ in which non-material themes such as human rights, rule of law, and democratisation, are of central interest,⁶ and relatedly explain its policy. For the other school, however –reflecting a largely rationalist and materialist interpretation of foreign policy– Germany's interest in the relationship is fundamentally unilateral, and appears more

¹ William E Paterson, "Does Germany Still Have a European Vocation?," *German Politics* 19, no. 1 (2010): 44.; Hanns Maull, *Germany's Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, ed. Hanns Maull (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 2-3.; Hanns Maull, "Germany and Japan: The New Civilian Powers," *Foreign Affairs* 69, no. 5 (1990): 91.

² Andrei S Markovits and Simon Reich, *The German Predicament: Memory and Power in the New Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 24.; Sebastian Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," *German Politics* 10, no. 1 (2001): 34-53.; Thomas Banchoff, "German Identity and European Integration," *European Journal of International Relations* 5, no. 3 (1999): 259.; William E Paterson, "Beyond Semi-Sovereignty: The New Germany in the New Europe," *German Politics* 5, no. 2 (1996): 182.

³ Maull, 3.; Adrian Hyde-Price and Charlie Jeffery, "Germany in the European Union: Constructing Normality," *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 39, no. 4 (2001): 695.

⁴ Banchoff, 259.; Markovits and Reich, 206.; Hanns Maull, "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power?'," *German Politics* 9, no. 2 (2000): 14.

⁵ Matthias V Struwe, "The Policy of 'Critical Dialogue': An Analysis of European Human Rights Policy Towards Iran from 1992 to 1997," *Durham Research Online* (1998): 3.; Riccardo Alcaro, *Europe and Iran's Nuclear Crisis: Lead Groups and EU Foreign Policy-Making* (New York: Springer, 2018).; Cornelius Adebahr, *Europe and Iran: The Nuclear Deal and Beyond* (Routledge, 2017).

⁶ Struwe, 20.; Bernd Kaussler, "European Union Constructive Engagement with Iran (2000–2004): An Exercise in Conditional Human Rights Diplomacy," *Iranian Studies* 41, no. 3 (2008): 265-95.

adequately explained by commercial and trade interests.⁷ That is to say, for this school of thought, the non-rationalist, non-materialist interests of an archetype civilian power, appear marginalised, or potentially inconsequential to explaining Germany's foreign policy towards Iran. Accordingly, at the essence of these contradictory explanations of Germany's foreign policy towards Iran, lies a critical problematizing of the very understanding that a constructivist-inspired, *civilian power role concept*,⁸ may in fact account for German foreign policy and interest in this case.

Despite this apparent anomaly, present accounts of Germany's relationship with Iran have neither considered the relationship from a civilian power perspective, nor meaningfully addressed it from any underlying analytical or theoretical vantage point. Nevertheless, as evidenced by these two distinct schools of thought –representing differing theoretical and analytical perspectives– determining whether Germany's relationship with Iran can be explained by its civilian power role concept, is both the key to resolving fundamental differences within existing literature, and of potential implication for wider understandings of post-unification Germany. This means approaching the relationship from such a perspective allows one to better explain Germany's relationship with Iran, as well as understand its true significance, in a broader context.

Consequently, this thesis undertakes an original approach to researching Germany's relationship with Iran, in which the prevailing theoretical perspective of Germany's civilian power role concept is leveraged, to consider whether this can, indeed, explain the relationship, despite apparent challenges to its fundamental assumptions. In this manner, the thesis not only aspires to resolve a present dichotomy of explanations concerning the relationship itself, but to further determine if leading explanations of post-unification German foreign policy,

⁷ Johannes Reissner, "Europe and Iran: Critical Dialogue," in *Honey and Vinegar: Incentives, Sanctions, and Foreign Policy*, ed. Richard N Haass and Meghan L O'Sullivan (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2000), 36-39.; Charles Lane, "Germany's New Ostpolitik," *Foreign Affairs* (1995): 77-79.; Johan Bergenäs, "The European Union's Evolving Engagement with Iran: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back," *Nonproliferation Review* 17, no. 3 (2010): 500-03.

⁸ Harnisch, 37.; Banchoff, 259-89.; Sebastian Harnisch and Hanns Maull, *Germany as a Civilian Power?: The Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, ed. Sebastian Harnisch and Hanns Maull (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 3.; Maull, *Germany's Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, 3-4.

and interest, are, in fact, problematized by this case. Accordingly, there are two questions underlying this research project:

1. *To what extent does Germany's bilateral relationship with Iran challenge fundamental assumptions of contemporary German foreign policy, identity, and interest (as encapsulated by the civilian power role concept)?*
2. *How does one explain post-unification Germany's bilateral relationship with Iran?*

To address these questions, the thesis will begin with a literature review chapter, in which key differences between rationalist, and constructivist analytical perspectives of foreign policy will be outlined. In doing so, it further demonstrates that differences between these perspectives, in turn, constitute a fundamental source of debate surrounding the orientation of post-unification Germany. Despite this, the chapter ultimately demonstrates that a constructivist-variant, civilian power role concept, represents the prevailing, or leading explanation of post-unification German foreign policy, identity, and interest. By evidencing this, the chapter critically establishes that a constructivist-inspired, civilian power role concept, is the necessary theoretical framework for purposes of addressing the relationship. The chapter then shows how existing accounts of Germany's foreign policy towards Iran have resulted in crucial differences of understanding, which remain unresolved. Above all, it will be demonstrated that these differences not only preclude true understanding of the relationship, but in appearing to problematize wider assumptions of post-unification Germany's *continuity* as a civilian power, they hold particular value for advancing present understandings of post-unification Germany.

Following this, chapter two will articulate how a process-tracing methodology is optimal for purposes of conducting a single-case study, of post-unification German foreign policy and interest. The chapter shows that although a process-tracing methodology comes in several forms, with differing aims and assumptions, a *case-explaining* form of process-tracing is ideal for addressing the research questions of this thesis. Having established this, and noted a process-tracing methodology's use of diagnostic criteria, the chapter then returns to consideration of the civilian power role concept, to establish the key, diagnostic criteria utilised. These diagnostic criteria are shown to manifest in four, distinct facets of the civilian

power role concept, which can be used within a case-explaining, process-tracing methodology, to determine whether a civilian power understanding can explain Germany's relationship with Iran. These facets of a civilian power Germany are:

1. *A commitment to multilateralism and cooperation.*
2. *A commitment to human rights, rule of law, and democratisation.*
3. *An acceptance that norms and values supersede material interests.*
4. *A belief that political and diplomatic solutions are always preferable to use of force.*

With these four facets in mind, chapters three through six each address one facet of the civilian power role concept, to answer the research questions above.

Chapter three addresses the multilateral and cooperative facet of Germany's foreign policy towards Iran, by looking at its policy intersections with three partnerships central to both Germany's ostensible identity as a civilian power, as well as its relationship with Iran: The United States (U.S.), the European Union (E.U.), and Israel. In addressing this facet, the chapter will ultimately evidence an assertive, unilaterally inclined Germany, committed to pursuing its subjective interests towards Iran, despite expectations it would bilaterally prioritise multilateral and cooperative efforts as a civilian power.

Following this, chapter four addresses Germany's commitment to human rights, rule of law, and democratisation in its relationship with Iran. The chapter evidences that notwithstanding both an espoused commitment to such interests in its relationship with Iran, and a professed contingency of political and economic ties to improvements in these areas, Germany's policy ultimately exhibited indifference to these considerations, and resulted in further intensification of economic relations.

Bearing these economic features in mind, chapter five considers the extent to which commercial and trade relations appear to challenge civilian power expectations that norms and values come before rationalist, and materialist, economic interests. By addressing this facet of the civilian power role concept, the chapter demonstrates that economic considerations do, in fact, explain *most* of the relationship. Of critical importance, however,

the chapter ultimately shows that Germany's commitment to a key, identity-based interest in preventing use of force, or contributing to use of force through economic ties, curbs, or even at times, precludes, economic engagement. In this manner, the chapter evidences a clear limitation to otherwise rationalist, and materialist interests, and suggests the final arbiter of Germany's policy interest towards Iran is, indeed, based upon identity.

Having established that an underlying identity, curbs, or even precludes, an economic interest noted to trivialise several facets of the civilian power role concept in this case, chapter six considers whether such an identity is attributable to the fourth, and final facet of the civilian power role concept: a commitment to political solutions, and an abhorrence of use of force. Ultimately, the chapter not only demonstrates a high-degree of confidence this identity in question is consistent with the civilian power role concept, but it critically shows that the depth of Germany's interest in this facet, further explains an ardent defence of its subjective policy strategy towards Iran.

Ultimately, by approaching Germany's relationship towards Iran from this original perspective, it will be evidenced that despite a prevalence of civilian power understandings of post-unification Germany, this case study of German foreign policy, and interest, largely challenges prevailing, civilian power explanations. However, despite demonstrating that Germany's post-unification foreign policy towards Iran reflects a shift away from civilian power explanations, and underscores a largely economic one, this thesis nevertheless shows a key civilian power contingency remains the final arbiter of Germany's policy. In doing so, this study stands to make a significant, and original contribution to knowledge by:

1. Greatly clarifying present explanations of Germany's relationship towards Iran, with the first substantive account from any theoretical, or analytical perspective.
2. Leveraging this original perspective of Germany's relationship with Iran to question the validity of civilian power explanations of post-unification German foreign policy, identity, and interest, in this case.

This means the thesis not only offers an original perspective of the relationship itself, but critically, it considers for the first time how Germany's relationship with Iran holds wider implications for prevailing explanations of German foreign policy and interest. In other words, the original perspective of this thesis not only holds significance for advancing new understandings the relationship, but it makes a valuable contribution to a growing body of literature preoccupied with Germany's ostensible continuity in foreign policy as a civilian power.

Chapter One: A Review of Literature

Introduction

As noted in the introduction to this thesis, academic literature concerning Germany's relationship with Iran is surprisingly limited,⁹ and in many respects, contradictory in its explanation of Germany's underlying interest.¹⁰ Moreover, at the essence of such contradictions, lies a fundamental challenge to prevailing understandings of post-unification German foreign policy, identity, and interest.¹¹ Although this may be accurate, what exactly does this mean? In what respects are existing accounts of Germany's relationship with Iran limited? Where are contradictions in the relationship apparent, and how are these contradictions relevant to prevailing understandings of post-unification Germany? Furthermore, what, in fact, even constitutes a "prevailing understanding" of German foreign policy, identity, and interest? As these questions suggest, in order to fully understand where limitations to knowledge exist, and how such deficiencies in turn necessitate this unique approach to explaining Germany's relationship with Iran, it is firstly essential to address existing thought on post-unification German foreign policy, identity, and interest, as well as literature regarding Germany's relationship with Iran. Accordingly, the following chapter—a review of literature—aims not only to demonstrate that a profound gap in knowledge exists concerning German foreign policy towards Iran, but further, to illustrate precisely how this under-evaluated case study of German foreign policy, potentially indicates a wider, and critical challenge, to prevailing understandings of post-unification Germany as a *civilian power*.

To accomplish this, the following chapter will begin by addressing leading *rationalist*, and *materialist* understandings of foreign policy, in order to demonstrate how these, remain inconsistent with post-unification Germany, and therefore are considered inadequate for explaining German foreign policy and interest. Thereafter, alternative *constructivist* theoretical perspectives will be addressed, before demonstrating how a constructivist account of foreign policy, ostensibly inspires, and underpins the prevailing understanding of post-unification

⁹ Refer to the introduction of this thesis.

¹⁰ Refer to the introduction of this thesis.

¹¹ Refer to the introduction of this thesis.

Germany, as a *civilian power*. The chapter will then consider what constitutes a civilian power. Although, indeed, this thesis concerns itself with German foreign policy towards Iran, critically, it does so as a case study of post-unification German foreign policy, identity, and interest. Consequently, before even turning to literature on the relationship itself, this case study approach both necessitates in-depth consideration of theoretical and analytical perspectives, as well as debates regarding post-unification German foreign policy, and interest. Only once this is accomplished, will the chapter then be able to effectively address the manner in which current literature on Germany's relationship with Iran, not only remains limited, and appears contradictory, but critically, as such, presents challenges to broader understandings of post-unification Germany, as a constructivist-inspired, civilian power.

Ultimately, by approaching existing literature in this manner, the following chapter will underscore that literature, albeit instrumental in furthering knowledge concerning post-unification German foreign policy towards Iran, has nonetheless insufficiently resolved analytical challenges through advancement of contradictory explanations. These contradictions not only limit understanding of the relationship, but remain central to a growing body of literature concerned with the future of Germany's civilian power understanding. In this manner, the review of literature will demonstrate a vital necessity of considering Germany's foreign policy towards Iran from the original perspective envisaged in this thesis, thereby allowing not only for an original contribution to knowledge, but one of significance, and wider value, to understandings of post-unification Germany.

1.1 Broader Understandings of International Relations

To truly understand the contradictory nature of existing accounts of German foreign policy towards Iran, it is firstly essential to begin with scholarship's generalised theoretical and analytical perspectives of international relations. Myriad debates within scholarship concerning German foreign policy in general, and Germany's relationship with Iran in particular, exist in terms of Germany's conformity to, or divergence from, such perspectives. As such, consideration of these analytical perspectives is essential, both in order to show how prevailing interpretations of post-unification Germany differ from rationalist explanations, as

well as how these differences, in fact, remain central to presently contradictory explanations of Germany's relationship with Iran.

1.1.1 Rationalist Explanations

To begin, it is important to understand that leading “theoretical paradigms” of neorealism and neoliberalism fall into a school of “rationalist” thought, whereby, states are viewed as the primary actors upon the international stage, and “material interests, a set of external constraints and rational choices,” ultimately coalesce to forge the calculus and basis of state action.¹² However, beyond these consistent attributes, rationalist perspectives are largely split according to differing conclusions, despite similar fundamental assumptions.¹³

Kenneth Waltz's seminal work in neorealism, *Theory of International Politics*,¹⁴ posits that states, as the fundamental actors in the international environment, exist in an anarchic world, and are motivated by self-preservation, and self-interest.¹⁵ As a result, Waltz posits the sustained, anarchic nature of the international realm, leads states to conduct themselves as profoundly individualistic actors.¹⁶ Such a theoretical view predicates itself upon the notion that a state's individual ability to act influentially through traditional military, or economic means, plays an essential role in determining a state's relative “systemic position.”¹⁷ In other words, a state's capacity to advantageously position itself within the global “balance of power,”¹⁸ or “distribution of capabilities”¹⁹ among states, remains the central focus, and endgame of all state action.

Critically, such neorealist theoretical perspectives factored prominently in literature addressing early-unification German foreign policy, with some anticipating increased instability within Europe following the Cold War's conclusion, and a dissolution of the bipolar

¹² Banchoff, 261.

¹³ Struwe, 7.

¹⁴ Kenneth N Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 2010).

¹⁵ Ibid., 93.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Struwe, 7.

¹⁸ Waltz, 102.

¹⁹ Ibid., 97-98.

geopolitical environment.²⁰ For neorealists, bipolarity was an essential aspect of preserving peaceful interactions between European states following World War Two, and cognizant of a shifting balance of power, it was hypothesised that a return of multipolar power dynamics on the European continent, would likely entail a resurgent Germany, determined to become a leading power.²¹ Kenneth Waltz himself envisaged a Germany not only destined to reassume its position as a major power,²² but one systemically preordained to eventual proliferation of nuclear weapons.²³ Indeed, for some, notwithstanding domestic apprehension in Germany over assertive foreign policy, Germany pursuing a neorealist approach to international relations in the post-unification era held merit.²⁴ The prominence of such neorealist understandings led many to anticipate a re-emergence of German assertiveness, or alternatively, a determination to dominate others as an economic bulwark.²⁵ In this manner, whether perceived as the product of German calculation or not, literature in the era of unification reflected a palpable sense “German unification [...] [could be] a ‘runaway freight train’ headed for collision as a result of sheer momentum and the inability or unwillingness of the drivers to apply the brakes.”²⁶

However, despite a neorealist school of thought on German foreign policy in early-unification scholarship, others discerned relative *continuity*²⁷ between pre- and post-unification German foreign policy, thereby challenging neorealist interpretations, which anticipate states will recalibrate their policy, amidst changes to the global balance of power.²⁸ Consequently, the ostensible absence of any significant changes in Germany’s foreign policy, identity, and interests, despite geopolitical changes, represented for some, a fundamental challenge to realist explanations of contemporary German foreign policy.²⁹ This continuity not only raised

²⁰ John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War," *International Security* 15, no. 1 (1990): 6.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 5-7.

²² Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics," *ibid.* 18, no. 2 (1993): 50.

²³ *Ibid.*, 67-68.

²⁴ Rainer Baumann, Volker Rittberger, and Wolfgang Wagner, "Macht Und Machtpolitik: Neorealistische Außenpolitiktheorie Und Prognosen Über Die Deutsche Außenpolitik Nach Der Vereinigung," *Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen* 6, no. 2 (1999): 245-86.

²⁵ Maull, 91.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Harnisch, 39.; Banchoff, 263.

²⁸ 263-64.

²⁹ Harnisch, 38.; Banchoff, 264.

questions as to whether neorealist perspectives remained consistent with the essence of contemporary foreign policy,³⁰ but led others to further determine realist perspectives are inadequate for explaining German foreign policy, because “the term ‘power’ no longer means what it used to”.³¹ Importantly, for some, this was attributable to an understanding power no longer predicated itself on “military force and conquest,”³² because power was determined less by the means utilised to influence others, and more by a simple capacity to do so.³³ In this regard, state interest could very well feature a subordination of traditional military power to “economic, political, institutional and ideological sources of power”,³⁴ whereby, regardless of intent, a return to Germany’s pre-war foreign policy was no longer possible, because the essence of power itself had changed.³⁵ Accordingly, and of profound significance both for understanding post-unification Germany, as well as expectations of its foreign policy behaviour towards a state such as Iran, these doubts, in turn, led scholars to seek out alternative explanations of German foreign policy, beyond the scope of realist accounts.

With such sentiments in mind, other rationalists, Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye foremost among them, sought to address such perceived theoretical deficiencies with the advancement of neoliberal thought.³⁶ Preeminent among rationalist alternatives, and expanding upon the sense of potential military subordination to economic and institutional power, this neoliberal perspective held that deficiencies inherent in realist explanations of international relations³⁷ could be overcome, and reality better explained,³⁸ in terms of “complex interdependence”.³⁹ According to this perspective, contrary to eras in which power, and interest may have engendered military conflict with one another, today, societies are profoundly interconnected through “formal” and “informal” ties, at “interstate, transgovernmental, [...] [or]

³⁰ Maull, 92.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Joseph S Nye, "Soft Power," *Foreign policy*, no. 80 (1990): 154.

³³ Ibid., 155.

³⁴ Adrian Hyde-Price, *Germany and European Order: Enlarging Nato and the Eu* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 10.

³⁵ Ibid., 8.

³⁶ Robert Owen Keohane and Joseph S Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, 4th ed. ed. (New York: Longman Publishing Group, 2012).

³⁷ Ibid., 19.

³⁸ Ibid., 19-20.

³⁹ Ibid., 19.

transnational⁴⁰ levels. For this understanding, an absence of hierarchy exists amongst issues, by which, contrary to realist thought, an issue of “military security does not [inherently] dominate the agenda,”⁴¹ and “military force is not used by governments towards other governments [...] when complex interdependence prevails.”⁴² In this sense, a neoliberal theoretical explanation seeks to explain that a state such as Germany might avoid realist tendencies simply because cooperation and institutionalisation represent mitigating factors for conflict, and trivialise the pre-eminence of traditional power determinants.⁴³ Thus, amidst what many saw as a perplexing degree of continuity from Germany following unification, neoliberals aspired to better explain German foreign policy, particularly given that whether subscribing to rationalist thought or not, observers were cognizant that for contemporary Germany, “institutions [...] economic interdependence [...] vibrant international organisations” and other such features of interconnectedness, are preeminent considerations.⁴⁴

However, notwithstanding such parallels, as well as claims that neoliberalism represents an opposing end of the rationalist spectrum from neorealism,⁴⁵ this perspective –similar to all rationalist interpretations of international relations– would nevertheless anticipate a noticeable shift in German policy, based upon structural changes to the international realm.⁴⁶ Regardless, neoliberalism represents an essential theoretical progression in literature’s framing of contemporary German foreign policy, as well as understanding the significance underlying contradictory accounts of German foreign policy towards Iran.

As Matthias Struwe explicitly notes in “The Policy of Critical Dialogue: an analysis of European Human Rights Policy Towards Iran 1992-1997,”⁴⁷ –arguably the only work in existence to tangibly reference theoretical perspectives underlying German and European foreign policy towards Iran– neoliberalism, indeed, holds important conceptual relevance to understanding this relationship. For Struwe, such an analytical perspective represents a

⁴⁰ Ibid., 19-20.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., 21.

⁴³ Ibid., 20-31.

⁴⁴ Maull, “German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a ‘Civilian Power?’,” 17.

⁴⁵ Keohane and Nye, 19.

⁴⁶ Banchoff, 263.

⁴⁷ Struwe, 1-55.

compelling explanation for Germany's desire to cultivate a robust economic facet of its relationship with Iran, given that for neoliberals, economic linkages are a potential catalyst for inducing political change, while reducing the probability for conflict.⁴⁸ In doing so, what Struwe indirectly, albeit significantly, illuminates, is that for some, robust commercial and trade interests bespeak an intrinsically rationalist German actor. Indeed, this point of significance will be revisited in greater detail later. However, despite the significance of this point, in many respects, one of Struwe's greatest contributions on the subject of German policy towards Iran, is a further recognition of the inherent limitations of rationalist thought to account for other prominent aspects of post-unification German foreign policy towards Iran.⁴⁹ In Struwe's opinion, despite neoliberalism's apparent capacity to explain some aspects of Germany's underlying interest, rationalist perspectives nevertheless fail to adequately explain how other, normative and identity-based dimensions, constitute important considerations in the design and implementation of its Iran policy.⁵⁰ In this manner, a perceived gap in explaining the relationship itself, which mirrors a more widely sensed inability to explain post-unification German foreign policy through a rationalist, or materialist lens, encourages approaching the relationship from a perspective addressing non-rationalist interests as well. But to what extent has literature proposed theoretical and analytical perspectives that might account for such normative and identity-based considerations in foreign policy?

1.1.2 Constructivist Accounts of Foreign Policy

To some, the prominent rationalist perspectives are often inconsistent with reality, particularly given the appearance of normative and identity-based considerations in foreign policy by states like Germany.⁵¹ In this regard, others, preoccupied with a perceived disparity between rationalist expectations, and foreign policy choices by post-unification Germany, have instead subscribed to a *constructivist* explanation of German foreign policy and interest.⁵² In many respects, this is not a surprising decision for those who perceive shortcomings in rationalist

⁴⁸ Ibid., 7-8.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 690-91.

⁵² Ibid., 689.; Banchoff, 260.; Struwe, 8.

accounts of German foreign policy. In fact, the concept of constructivism was itself precipitated by a perceived inability of rationalist analytical perspectives to attribute foreign policy outcomes, to underlying self-interest, and “rational calculation.”⁵³ Accordingly, with a sense theoretical perspectives had somehow failed to explain German continuity, and interests of a non-rational nature, scholars referenced constructivism as a potential means of understanding why a now capable, and increasingly influential state like Germany, failed to pursue unilateral, self-interested, and accordingly, rationalist, foreign policy aims.⁵⁴ But what exactly does constructivism entail, and to what extent does this inform literature on German foreign policy?

Although for rationalist accounts of foreign policy, “behavior represents the purposive pursuit of prosperity and security within a given international constellation of power, institutions and politics,”⁵⁵ for constructivism, the focus of explaining behaviour rests instead upon the manner in which *identity* shapes the course of state action.⁵⁶ John Ruggie, one of the foremost scholars on the subject of constructivism, argues rationalist perspectives have become myopic in viewing the institutional structure of international relations as “material[istic]” and individualistic.⁵⁷ This, in turn, produces a critical indifference towards the role of “identity and interests” in foreign policy –something rationalists often assume to be merely “exogenous and given.”⁵⁸ In this manner, a constructivist perspective focuses precisely on the weaknesses of rationalist explanations of foreign policy, that others have sensed in both the context of post-unification Germany generally, as well as its relationship with Iran, specifically. By inferring the existence of state calculus and interest forged beyond rationalist considerations, in much the same way literature has concerning Germany, this constructivist perspective posits “identity and/or interests of actors,” do in fact, constitute central factors in foreign policy behaviour.⁵⁹ Given constructivism can be viewed as a major attempt within literature to address state objectives existing beyond the scope of traditional assumptions of interest, this

⁵³ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 692.

⁵⁴ Banchoff, 260.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 276.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ John Gerard Ruggie, *Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalisation*, (New York: Routledge, 1998). 3.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 13.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 3.

means constructivist thought has garnered further support, as limitations to traditional, rationalist interpretations have become progressively acknowledged within literature.⁶⁰ In this manner, examples of foreign policy continuity, despite material and structural changes –post-unification Germany being a prime example thereof– are frequently referenced to bolster, and even substantiate the theoretical validity of constructivism.⁶¹

It remains important to note that material interests are not inconsequential to constructivists, but rather, a secondary impetus underlying state behaviour, to how “collective identity shapes the content of state interests and the course of state action.”⁶² This is a critical point, as the existence of material interests for a state such as Germany, say, in the form of trade and commercial relations, does not inherently refute constructivism. Despite a clear theoretical divergence from rationalist perspectives, constructivist thought does recognise “power and interests are intimately involved.”⁶³ In contrast, however, it means identity, and its related interest, are expected to supersede, or transcend the material. This means for some constructivists, “the manner in which the material world shapes and is shaped by human action and interaction depends [entirely] on the dynamic normative and epistemic interpretations of the material world.”⁶⁴ The implication being: even at a material level, there is a fundamentally normative, and identity-based interest underlying policy behaviour.

In this manner, despite acknowledging a material level of interest by states, constructivism’s greatest strengths are revealed under conditions in which there is an absence of substantive material interests that can explain foreign policy behaviour. It is here, in the realm beyond material, and patently rationalist explanations of state action, where constructivists submit a fundamental “role of human consciousness in international relations” must necessarily occur,⁶⁵ and the “building blocks of international reality are ideational”,⁶⁶ in the absence of other explanations for policy. Here, “ideational factors” –as the manifestation of underlying

⁶⁰ Ibid., 11.

⁶¹ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 696.

⁶² Banchoff, 262.

⁶³ Ruggie. 15.

⁶⁴ Emanuel Adler, "Seizing the Middle Ground," *European Journal of International Relations* 3, no. 3 (1997): 322.

⁶⁵ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 691.

⁶⁶ Ruggie. 32.

normative understandings of states—⁶⁷ are the only discernible impetus of foreign policy decisions. The normative understandings of an actor ostensibly coalesce to forge a “state identity,” and this, in turn, represents “constructivism’s core explanatory concept”.⁶⁸

In this regard, constructivism holds that foreign policy is emblematic of underlying socio-political, or socio-cultural identities of a state,⁶⁹ and foreign policy ostensibly mirrors a subjective “national identity [...] its interests and aspirations [...] [as] embedded in [...] history”.⁷⁰ The convergence and confluence of these normative, and identity-based understandings, accordingly establishes a “logic of appropriateness” in foreign policy – reflecting both societal, as well as international expectations of a policy– by which, state action extends beyond mere “interest maximisation”,⁷¹ and exists as a function of its identity. However, and most imperatively, this means constructivism’s validity in a particular case remains contingent upon exhibiting both “content of state identity,” as well as “its effects,”⁷² upon policy outcomes. In other words, there is one “observable implication –state behavior should not contradict state identity,” and “where behavior contradicts identity, the latter cannot be considered a source of its conduct.”⁷³

This means despite constructivism’s preoccupation with the exact shortcomings surmised by many in the context of post-unification Germany, whether constructivism offers an adequate, or valid explanation of a state such as Germany, and its relationship with Iran, is entirely contingent upon policy behaviour affirming a state’s accepted, and espoused identity. Accordingly, in order for constructivism to explain foreign policy behaviour of a state like Germany, one must first and foremost, establish an underlying identity, and secondly, determine if its foreign policy is consistent with such expectations. But to what extent does literature on Germany appear to accept a particular identity? And moreover, do existing accounts attribute post-unification German foreign policy to such an identity? With these

⁶⁷ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 692.

⁶⁸ Banchoff, 271.

⁶⁹ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 692.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 692-93.; Christopher Hill and William Wallace, eds., *The Actors in Europe's Foreign Policy* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 8.

⁷¹ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 692.

⁷² Banchoff, 262.

⁷³ Ibid., 278.

questions in mind, and to understand the manner in which expectations of post-unification German foreign policy behaviour may exist, as well as potentially explain Germany's relationship with Iran, it is now essential to consider literature's prevailing interpretations of post-unification German foreign policy, and identity.

1.2 Civilian Power or Emergent Hegemony?

As noted above, literature preceding, and in the immediate aftermath of German unification, featured a speculative narrative of renewed German assertiveness. In the years following unification, as the dust of broad speculation settled into reality, two prominent schools of thought had emerged within literature concerning German foreign policy: one positing German foreign policy would remain constrained by institutionalisation and cooperation, while the other, anticipated an inevitable ascendancy by Germany to a position of hegemony.⁷⁴ This dichotomy led to the advancement by Gunther Hellmann of two frequently referenced "images of Germany": Germany as a "Gulliver," "bound to become too big for the rest of Europe to handle," and conversely, Germany as a "Ulysses," suggesting awareness of, and a determination to ensure self-restraint in its foreign policy behaviour.⁷⁵

Notwithstanding the advancement of hegemonic characterisations in early, post-unification literature concerning Germany, over time, a growing body of literature on post-unification Germany led Hellmann to declare: "the most prominent feature of German foreign policy has [in fact] been the continuity in the rhetoric of continuity."⁷⁶ Nevertheless, although a growing body of literature, indeed, bespoke continuity, for others, questions arose as to whether it was more a "'rhetoric of continuity' rather than continuity itself."⁷⁷ In this regard, even with continuity increasingly recognised within literature following unification, questions regarding the validity of this perspective have never been fully resolved. Accordingly, questions as to

⁷⁴ Klaus H Goetz, "Integration Policy in a Europeanized State: Germany and the Intergovernmental Conference," *Journal of European Public Policy* 3, no. 1 (1996): 23-24.

⁷⁵ Gunther Hellmann, "The Sirens of Power and German Foreign Policy: Who Is Listening?," *German Politics* 6, no. 2 (1997): 29-30.

⁷⁶ "Nationale Normalität Als Zukunft? Zur Außenpolitik Der Berliner Republik," *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik* 44, no. 7 (1999): 837.

⁷⁷ Ruth Wittlinger, *German National Identity in the Twenty-First Century: A Different Republic after All?*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). Location 290 (electronic version).

whether German foreign policy –in case studies such as Iran– in fact, supports assumptions of continuity, holds particular value today, in that wider questions of German continuity with pre-unification tendencies endures as a fundamental question within literature on contemporary Germany.

Despite the existence of fundamental doubts, it is vital to recognise advancement of a continuity narrative was progressively bolstered by the publication of substantive empirical analyses from the likes of Anderson and Goodman, who cite striking consistency between pre-unification and post-unification German foreign policy, particularly with respect to cooperation and European integration efforts.⁷⁸ For some, this disposition resulted from a “forty [year] [...] reliance on a web of international institutions [...] caus[ing] these institutions to be embedded in the very definition of state interests”,⁷⁹ whereby, contemporary German foreign policy remains forever *tamed* in a tale of progressive “institutionalisation of power”.⁸⁰ This, in turn, ostensibly subdued traditional state interest.⁸¹

Such literary assertions, paired with a lack of validation for more cynical predictions of renewed German assertiveness, had the implication of encouraging scholarship to more widely embrace the narrative of continuity, along with its implications for rationalist understandings of foreign policy. Not only did continuity receive widespread acceptance,⁸² but as Germany’s “axiomatically multilateralist” nature,⁸³ and penchant for *Selbstbindung*, or self-restraint,⁸⁴ continued at the expense of rationalist anticipations, literature focused upon the manner in which identity, ostensibly superseded subjective, or individualistic “interests and preferences.”⁸⁵ Accordingly, enduring features of pre-unification Germany –such as multilateralism– in post-unification German foreign policy, appeared to some, emblematic of

⁷⁸ Jeffrey Anderson and John Goodman, "Mars or Minerva? A United Germany in a Post-Cold War Europe," in *After the Cold War: International Institutions and State Strategies in Europe, 1989-1991*, ed. Robert Owen Keohane, Joseph S Nye, and Stanley Hoffmann (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

⁷⁹ Ibid., 60.

⁸⁰ Peter J Katzenstein, ed. *Tamed Power: Germany in Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 3.

⁸¹ Ibid., xii.; Goetz, 24-40.

⁸² Wittlinger. Location 290 (electronic version).

⁸³ Hanns Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", *Survival* 42, no. 2 (2000): 60-61.

⁸⁴ Simon Bulmer, Andreas Maurer, and William Paterson, "The European Policy-Making Machinery in the Berlin Republic: Hindrance or Handmaiden?", *German Politics* 10, no. 1 (2001): 184.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

an identity rooted in normative understandings.⁸⁶ This, in turn, led others to settle upon an understanding of Germany's "firm preference for normative and institutional over material interests",⁸⁷ in which more consistent with a constructivist understanding of foreign policy, rather than a rationalist, or materialist one, "deeply rooted norms [...] colored German perceptions of rationality",⁸⁸ and shaped its identity accordingly.

Such perspectives represent a critical development in literature, reflecting not only perceived continuity, but establishing tangible linkages between continuity, normative considerations, and the existence of an underlying state identity behind German foreign policy. For some accounts, however, such factors, albeit perplexing from a rationalist perspective, were not without benefit, and perhaps even bespoke calculation. In many respects, the espousal of normative commitments appeared profoundly efficacious in its ability to bestow long aspired to "stability, decency [...] and legitimacy"⁸⁹ upon Germany as a foreign policy actor, and a German "suppress[ion]" of national interests, would be natural, given the only national interest acceptable at this time was "international rehabilitation [...] for historical reasons."⁹⁰ In this sense, although an eschewal of conventional interests occurred,⁹¹ and aspirations to pursue rationalist objectives were not widely embraced by German society,⁹² it is nevertheless imperative to note, for some accounts, normative or not, the "positive narrative" of cooperation, and other interests emblematic of normative preoccupations, were ultimately conducive to the realisation of German interests, including reunification itself.⁹³ Preceding unification, West Germany was "an economic giant but a political pygmy",⁹⁴ yet, through a long-term heeding of normative considerations, Germany managed to mitigate "diplomatic

⁸⁶ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 695.; Anderson and Goodman, 23-24.

⁸⁷ Jeffrey Anderson, "Hard Interests, Soft Power, and Germany's Changing Role in Europe," in *Tamed Power*, ed. Peter Katzenstein (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 80.

⁸⁸ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 691.

⁸⁹ Elizabeth Pond, "Germany Finds Its Niche as a Regional Power," *Washington Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (1996): 29.; William Paterson and Simon Bulmer, *Germany and the European Union: Europe's Reluctant Hegemon* (Red Globe Press, 2019), 27.

⁹⁰ Bulmer, Maurer, and Paterson, 178.

⁹¹ Simon Bulmer and William E Paterson, "Germany in the European Union: Gentle Giant or Emergent Leader?," *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs)* 72, no. 1 (1996): 12.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 23.

⁹³ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 695.; Paterson and Bulmer, 27.

⁹⁴ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 694.

disadvantages,”⁹⁵ and “enhanced tangibly” its diplomatic potential.⁹⁶ Benefits to German power and agency notwithstanding, such literary advancements merely served to further highlight a growing acceptance that calculated or not, German foreign policy featured an underlying identity, based upon normative understandings, and that interest itself was inextricably linked with it. But how does literature choose to define this identity, and corresponding interest? And importantly, to what extent does literature suggest this appears consistent with a constructivist explanation of foreign policy?

1.2.1 A Civilian Power Identity

Again, it is critical to appreciate two central premises within literature on post-unification Germany. Firstly, a sense that German foreign policy, and relatedly interest, occur beyond the scope of rationalist expectations alone, and secondly, that these entail a normatively-shaped identity. Bearing these premises in mind, many have argued a constructivist perspective of German foreign policy constitutes the most compelling explanation for its behaviour in general,⁹⁷ and for some, even aspects of German foreign policy towards Iran specifically.⁹⁸ For such accounts, it is argued German state behaviour remains empirically attributable to German state identity,⁹⁹ and post-unification continuity not only mirrors an “identity articulated within and across the major German parties”,¹⁰⁰ but such identity supersedes traditional interests, in large part, due to its history.¹⁰¹ Indeed, such a dynamic does appear largely consistent with constructivism’s underlying assumptions. However, if this accounts for German foreign policy, as noted previously, such a constructivist explanation necessitates both defining the identity itself, as well as evidencing its effects. Accordingly, this requires further considerations, including the manner in which literature contends history, and related normative assumptions, supposedly forge an identity, as well as how this, in turn,

⁹⁵ Bulmer and Paterson, 11.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Banchoff, 259.; Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 689.; Harnisch, 35-60.; Harnisch and Maull, 3.; Maull, *Germany's Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, 3-5.

⁹⁸ Struwe, 8.

⁹⁹ Banchoff, 260.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Bulmer, Maurer, and Paterson, 177.

may function to shape German interest, and ultimately, foreign policy outcomes such as its relationship with Iran.

In regard to such considerations, it is helpful to note literature on Germany is unambiguous in its attribution of contemporary German identity to a “legacy of the National Socialist past and the Second World War”, which are said to be “very apparent in [Germany’s] political institutions [and] [...] discourses.”¹⁰² For such accounts, the manner in which the past so meaningfully shapes Germany’s present, results from two concurrent dynamics, whereby “the weight of ‘collective memory’” concerning the past,¹⁰³ paired with a more objective, *historical memory*,¹⁰⁴ work to bring about a contemporary German preoccupation with normative, and non-rationalist considerations in foreign policy,¹⁰⁵ including “human rights, the rule of law and values such as liberty and equality”.¹⁰⁶ This process is addressed in greater depth in chapter two, but for purposes of understanding the manner in which existing literature accounts for this dynamic, it is critical to understand that based upon such a perspective, literature not only ascribed Germany’s normative understandings to the tangible effects of history, but also the formation of Germany’s underlying *identity*.¹⁰⁷ Consequently, for those to whom normative understandings and related identity explain German foreign policy, a post-unification Germany largely characterised by cooperation, espousal of supranational values, and a core belief that pursuing national objectives with military means was now superseded by other methods,¹⁰⁸ meant the manifestation of such an identity, appeared more adequately characterised in terms of a quintessential *civilian power*,¹⁰⁹ rather than a traditional one.

¹⁰² Wittlinger. Location 2 (electronic version).

¹⁰³ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 694.; Ruth Wittlinger and Martin Larose, "No Future for Germany's Past? Collective Memory and German Foreign Policy," *German Politics* 16, no. 4 (2007): 482.; Markovits and Reich, 14.; Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, Translated by Francis J. Ditter, Jr., and Vida Yazdi Ditter (New York: New York: Harper Colophon, 1980).

¹⁰⁴ Paterson, "Beyond Semi-Sovereignty: The New Germany in the New Europe," 181.; Markovits and Reich, 11-14.; Thomas Banchoff, "Historical Memory and German Foreign Policy: The Cases of Adenauer and Brandt," *German Politics & Society* 14, no. 2 (1996): 36.; "German Policy Towards the European Union: The Effects of Historical Memory," *German Politics* 6, no. 1 (1997): 60.

¹⁰⁵ Ruth Wittlinger and Martin Larose, "No Future for Germany's Past? Collective Memory and German Foreign Policy," *ibid.* 16, no. 4 (2007): 481-82.; Stephen Welch and Ruth Wittlinger, "The Resilience of the Nation State: Cosmopolitanism, Holocaust Memory and German Identity," *German politics and society* 29, no. 3 (2011): 44-45.; Markovits and Reich, xiii-13.

¹⁰⁶ Wittlinger. Location 3 (electronic version).

¹⁰⁷ Bulmer and Paterson, 11-12.; Anderson and Goodman, 23-62.

¹⁰⁸ Maull, 92-93.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 91-106.

A term originally coined by François Duchêne in the 1970s, *civilian power*¹¹⁰ as a concept was later refined and endowed significant prominence by Hanns Maull, who strived to substantiate its direct pertinence to explaining contemporary German foreign policy, through a number of works.¹¹¹ Arguably the foremost expert on Germany's ostensible civilian power disposition, Maull succinctly summarises the civilian power concept as "a foreign policy role concept –a complex set of norms, beliefs, attitudes and perceptions– which tells a state how to behave."¹¹² In this respect, the civilian power role concept is considered emblematic of a constructivist explanation,¹¹³ which, in turn, is said to explain Germany's lack of material interests, as well as abundant normative dimensions of its foreign policy.¹¹⁴ In other words, the civilian power role concept itself, is not only broadly accepted by civilian power proponents as a constructivist-variant role concept, but also, as the manifestation of Germany's identity, which is accordingly said to explain its determination to eschew traditional, rationalist, or materialist interests, in foreign policy cases such as Iran.

But what does this civilian power identity entail? Interestingly, although numerous scholars have addressed the civilian power role concept, there is a relative consensus within literature as to its objective, non-country specific definitional parameters. Accordingly, the general parameters of an ideal-type civilian power are assumed to entail the following six qualities, pursuant to various accounts within literature¹¹⁵ –which Maull specifically refers to as, the "civilizational hexagon of interrelated principles"¹¹⁶ – entailing:

1. Limitation or constrained use of force to resolve conflicts.

¹¹⁰ François Duchêne, "The European Community and the Uncertainties of Interdependence," in *A Nation Writ Large?* (Springer, 1973), 1-21.

¹¹¹ Maull.; Hanns Maull and Philip H Gordon, *German Foreign Policy and the German 'national Interest': German and American Perspectives* (American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, Johns Hopkins University, 1993).; Maull, "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power?'. "; "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?."; Harnisch and Maull.; Maull, *Germany's Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*.

¹¹² "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power?'," 14.

¹¹³ Ibid. Sebastian Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," *ibid.* 10, no. 1 (2001): 37.; Harnisch and Maull, 3.; Maull, *Germany's Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, 3-5.

¹¹⁴ Harnisch, 37.

¹¹⁵ Harnisch and Maull, 4.; Harnisch, 37.; Hanns Maull, "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power?'," *ibid.* 9, no. 2 (2000): 14-15.

¹¹⁶ "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power?'," 14.

2. Promotion and advancement of the rule of law.
3. Encouraging democratic participation.
4. Pacifism, and non-violent means of conflict prevention, or resolution.
5. Espousal of social justice within policy.
6. Cultivation of interdependence amongst states.

Further, it is argued “three norms” in particular have proven indispensable:

*“the willingness and ability to civilise international relations; [...] the willingness to transfer sovereignty [...] to supranational institutions [...] and opponent of unilateral action; [...] [as well as] eagerness to realise a civilised international order, even if this implies to forego short-term national interests.”*¹¹⁷

Beyond these more objective parameters, it is argued the approach reflects a subjective formation of “one’s own image of oneself and the expectations of others; both, in turn, reflect historical experiences and the effects of socialisation through learning.”¹¹⁸ In other words, as with a conventional constructivist account, the effects of *historical* and *collective memories* shape an actor within the scope of such generalised principles. With this in mind, Maull identifies four distinct, identity-based aspects of contemporary Germany foreign policy as a civilian power: *never again*, *never alone*, *politics not force*, and *norms define interests*.¹¹⁹ From this perspective, both a *never alone* and *politics not force* disposition have ostensibly accounted for Germany’s categorical rejection of unilateral efforts –particularly of a military nature– as well as the societal expectation Germany would elect for pacifistic, and cooperative approaches to foreign policy as part of its civilian power identity.¹²⁰ In this manner, there are clear behavioural expectations of a civilian power, in which given *norms define interests*¹²¹ –rather than rationalist, or materialist conceptualisations– foreign policy considerations ostensibly remain determined by these.

¹¹⁷ Harnisch and Maull, 3-4.

¹¹⁸ Maull, “German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a ‘Civilian Power?’,” 14.

¹¹⁹ “Germany and the Use of Force: Still a ‘Civilian Power?’,” 66-68.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

Thus, in many respects, it is Maull's characterisation of a German foreign policy predicated upon a *never again* mentality,¹²² which appears to have the most pivotal and formative effects of the identity-based pillars. As stated, "'Never again' [...] mean[s] no more concentration camps, no more genocide, no more coddling up to dictators, and no more human rights abuses", but in a much broader sense of impact for Maull, this combination of interests means German foreign policy features an "orientation" predicated upon crucial normative "'do's' and 'don'ts'".¹²³ In this manner, a "self-perception as a *Zivilmacht*," is understood to engender a determination to pursue foreign policy "in defense of victims of persecution and aggression",¹²⁴ meaning not only are German "national interests [...] routinely defined in terms of norms and values,"¹²⁵ but there is supposedly a "missionary element [...] in German foreign policy"¹²⁶ resulting from it. Critically, for such accounts, this means Germany's identity, as manifest in the civilian power role concept, entails a preeminent, if not requisite emphasis upon normative considerations in its foreign relationships,¹²⁷ and these considerations are accordingly understood to represent the impetus of German foreign policy efforts.

It is emphasised that "ideal-type civilian powers" exhibit a clear determination to promote a "civilizing" effect through international relations,¹²⁸ notwithstanding acknowledgement that civilian powers are not necessarily obligated to advance "'good causes' abroad".¹²⁹ In this sense, literature is somewhat abstruse regarding the extent to which a civilian power is obligated to develop policy in a specific manner. However, it is critically noted, a state only remains a civilian power, provided it preserves "key norms," pursues behaviour consistent with, and "do[ing] justice to all principles under question," and that should questions arise concerning the appropriateness of policy with values, the state will proactively attempt to reconcile any disparity.¹³⁰ Based upon this argument, one would anticipate Germany's incorporation of normative values such as human rights and democracy promotion in bilateral

¹²² Ibid., 66.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 705.

¹²⁵ Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 68.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 65-66.

¹²⁸ Harnisch, 37.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 35.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 45.

relationships, notwithstanding their required consideration in foreign relations under German *Basic Law*.¹³¹ In this sense, and given acceptance within literature that the civilian power role concept remains inherently predicated upon constructivist thought, there is accordingly “one observable implication –state behavior should not contradict state identity,” and “where behavior contradicts identity, the latter cannot be considered a source of its conduct.”¹³²

In other words, at its essence, determining whether Germany’s relationship with Iran is explained by, or appears to challenge the prevailing characterisation of post-unification Germany as a civilian power, rests entirely upon the manner in which its behaviour remains consistent with expectations of said identity. As argued by Maull, a civilian power advocates its underlying values in foreign policy, even provided it impedes the broader state of the relationship.¹³³ With this in mind, the prevailing understanding of post-unification Germany as a civilian power would accordingly lead observers to expect Germany’s approach towards Iran will result in a pre-eminence of normatively-forged, identity-based interests –as encompassed by the civilian power role concept– and the eschewal of rationalist and materialist interests.

Although literature appears fairly unanimous in its expected behaviour of a civilian power Germany, this entirely presupposes that one subscribes to the prevailing understanding of post-unification Germany as a civilian power. Importantly, there is similarly a critical suggestion that constructivists may have embellished or exaggerated continuity,¹³⁴ in which a myopic determination to continue advancement of the civilian power role concept has potentially supplanted meaningful analysis regarding normative change over time.¹³⁵ Change and evolution of normative understandings is acknowledged within constructivist perspectives,¹³⁶ and such an account anticipates a degree of flexibility within the normative underpinning of German foreign policy as time goes on. As a result, this in turn, has precipitated a wider, and fundamental question concerning post-unification Germany –for

¹³¹ Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 66.

¹³² Banchoff, "German Identity and European Integration," 278.

¹³³ Maull, "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 17.

¹³⁴ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 696.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Harnisch, 44.

constructivists, and non-constructivists alike— as to whether or not Germany may potentially be moving towards “‘constructing normality’?”,¹³⁷ despite observable continuity in the years following unification. In this manner, for literature, although a civilian power role concept remains the prevailing understanding at the moment, whether case studies of German foreign policy appear to challenge, or confirm civilian power explanations, nevertheless remains of profound value to the wider field of scholarship on post-unification Germany. Accordingly, attempting to explain a case study of German foreign policy such as Iran, along these theoretical lines, directly contributes to this debate of broader significance, in addition to further explicating the relationship itself.

1.3 Normalisation Emerging?

On this note, before preceding to literature concerning the case of Germany’s post-unification relationship with Iran, it is vital to appreciate that notwithstanding a current, prevailing understanding of Germany as a civilian power, there is nevertheless a growing body of literature raising the question of a potential *normalisation* of German foreign policy.¹³⁸ Consequently, it is imperative to address this theme before proceeding, for purposes of understanding how present analysis of the relationship itself, at its essence, mirrors this ongoing debate, and therefore, can beneficially contribute to a growing body of literature on the subject of potential normalisation, through the approach envisaged in this thesis. But what exactly does this concept of normalisation entail, and how would one recognise more normalised behaviour in the case of German foreign policy towards Iran?

For some scholars, Germany’s characterisation as a reluctant, albeit influential state –a *reluctant hegemon*¹³⁹ of sorts– is potentially being supplanted by a different understanding, featuring an assertion of “national preferences”,¹⁴⁰ and the “code word for this behavior [...]

¹³⁷ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 690.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 689-717.; Philip H Gordon, "The Normalization of German Foreign Policy," *Orbis* 38, no. 2 (1994): 225-43.; Simon Bulmer and William E Paterson, "Germany and the European Union: From 'Tamed Power' to Normalized Power?," *International Affairs* 86, no. 5 (2010): 1051-73.; "Germany in the European Union: Gentle Giant or Emergent Leader?," 9-32.

¹³⁹ Paterson and Bulmer.; Simon Bulmer and William E. Paterson, "Germany as the Eu's Reluctant Hegemon? Of Economic Strength and Political Constraints," *Journal of European Public Policy* 20, no. 10 (2013).

¹⁴⁰ Bulmer and Paterson, "Germany in the European Union: Gentle Giant or Emergent Leader?," 10.

[is] ‘normalization.’”¹⁴¹ In this regard, literature refers to normalisation in the German case, as “shorthand for a unified Germany casting off post-war constraints acting on its foreign policy”, and a movement away from the “‘reflexive multilateralism’”,¹⁴² central to prevailing civilian power understandings. As synthesised, although

*“Tamed power is characterised by multilateral institution-building [...] [and] unilateral steps are avoided [...] Normalisation, by contrast, is reflected in greater willingness to undertake unilateral demarches [...] and a discourse of national interest in policy statements.”*¹⁴³

Some accounts in literature posit that “key elites in the policy-making process have been recalibrating their approach in the light of their normative and ideational understandings of Germany’s foreign policy role.”¹⁴⁴ Pursuant to this argument, more normalised tendencies merely remained obfuscated “behind [former Chancellor Helmut Kohl’s] smothering veil of rhetoric on continuity,” and the omnipresent historical legacy in Germany, in turn, resulted in a more piecemeal exhibition of “new ideas”¹⁴⁵ concerning Germany and its subjective interests. Although some subscribing to this perspective argue Germany’s capacity for normalisation, and “rational decision-making,” remain fully reconcilable with normative dimensions of policy formulation,¹⁴⁶ the implication is nevertheless a potential weakening in prevailing thought of Germany as a paragon of the civilian power role concept.

As noted by Bulmer and Paterson’s in-depth analysis of Germany’s approach to a myriad of European Union (E.U.) related policy matters, Germany’s “‘tamed power’ characterisation [...] no longer holds,” and as evidenced by their analysis, “Germany will if necessary proceed alone (*Alleingang*) [...] German power has become ‘normalised’.”¹⁴⁷ For Beverly Crawford, this willingness runs deeper, to the extent that “power is crucial [...] [and] national power plays the determining role in shaping Germany’s foreign policy preferences.”¹⁴⁸ Expanding

¹⁴¹ Beverly Crawford, *Power and German Foreign Policy: Embedded Hegemony in Europe* (Basingstoke: Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 16.

¹⁴² Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 689.

¹⁴³ Bulmer and Paterson, "Germany and the European Union: From 'Tamed Power' to Normalized Power?," 1059.

¹⁴⁴ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 697.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 690-91.

¹⁴⁷ Bulmer and Paterson, "Germany and the European Union: From 'Tamed Power' to Normalized Power?," 1052.

¹⁴⁸ Crawford, 15.

upon the prominent argument advanced by Bulmer, Jeffery, and Paterson in *Germany's European Diplomacy: Shaping the regional milieu* –in which the scholars portray Germany as actively shaping the institutional framework and “policy profile” in which they participate¹⁴⁹ – Crawford argues Germany goes further, by acting as a fundamentally unilateral foreign policy actor, particularly when its institutional framework of cooperation fails to catalyse national interests.¹⁵⁰ Thus, in a striking divergence from the prevailing argument of continuity in foreign policy, some within literature have identified features suggesting notable differences in post-unification behaviour,¹⁵¹ as part of a potential normalisation. The implication of such interpretations within literature signifies not only a problematizing of the widely-embraced narrative of Germany's reflexive civilian power approach to foreign policy, but further, they serve to provoke deeper reflection upon prevailing understandings within literature that identify “norms and identity”¹⁵² as the preeminent impetus underpinning German foreign policy, rather than rationalist, or materialist aims, such as power. Accordingly, the emergence of a normalisation debate within literature concerning post-unification Germany, holds the broader implication of suggesting a potentially diminished relevancy of identity within German foreign policy decision making.

Critically, this characterisation in literature suggests Germany may, in fact, be progressively conformant to rationalist understandings of foreign policy,¹⁵³ thereby serving to challenge the widely accepted understanding of German foreign policy, identity, and interest, based upon a constructivist-inspired, civilian power role concept. In this respect, despite suggestions otherwise, if one subscribes to the normalisation school of thought, generally, “normalisation means Germany is becoming more like other powers [...] and implicitly, or explicitly conforming to the rationalist paradigms,”¹⁵⁴ by moving towards “hard bargaining of agent power,” rather than reliance upon mechanisms consistent with civilian power

¹⁴⁹ Simon Bulmer, Charlie Jeffery, and William E Paterson, *Germany's European Diplomacy: Shaping the Regional Milieu* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 16.

¹⁵⁰ Crawford, 16.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 20.

¹⁵² Bulmer and Paterson, "Germany and the European Union: From 'Tamed Power' to Normalized Power?," 1053.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 1059.

¹⁵⁴ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 690.

understandings.¹⁵⁵ Given continuity not only led to the cultivation and espousal of counter-theoretical perspectives such as constructivism, but further, served to substantiate their validity, a potential revelation that non-rationalist, non-materialist interests merely served as a façade, would mean evidence substantiating prevailing interpretations of contemporary German foreign policy faces a fundamental challenge. Indeed, the gravity of this question regarding *continuity* as a civilian power, versus potential *normalisation*, is so profound, it constitutes for some, “the great foreign policy debate in Germany.”¹⁵⁶

In this respect, it is essential to bear in mind, literature has by no means wholeheartedly embraced a *normalised* understanding of German foreign policy. This portrayal within literature is less indicative of an evolution in literature’s understanding of post-unification Germany per se, and more reflective of an emergent counter-perspective, and literary undercurrent, which seeks to account for what some see as an increasingly assertive, unilaterally inclined, and potentially rationalist Germany. Regardless of such perceived indications, those subscribing to the prevailing understanding of Germany as a constructivist-inspired, civilian power, have noted, if Germany was in fact driven by rationalist, and materialist tendencies, tangible exemplifications should have definitively emerged by the 21st Century, which they contend did not occur.¹⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the ambiguity and uncertainty within scholarship concerning the enduring relevancy of normative and identity-based interests in the articulation of German foreign policy, merely underscores the necessity of further investigations into the matter. Consequently, Germany’s relationship with states like Iran, represent valuable case studies for determining whether Germany’s civilian power identity, does indeed, endure as an appropriate explanation of its behaviour.

It is helpful in this regard, to consider for purposes of such questions, that fundamental premises underlying constructivist interpretations of foreign policy, require evidencing “identity to have some permanence [...] [and] in order to make a strong case for the persistence of identity [...] one must also demonstrate its resilience in the face of intervening

¹⁵⁵ Bulmer and Paterson, "Germany and the European Union: From 'Tamed Power' to Normalized Power?," 1060.

¹⁵⁶ Timothy Garton Ash, "Germany's Choice," *Foreign Affairs* 73, no. 4 (1994): 65.

¹⁵⁷ Banchoff, "German Identity and European Integration," 264.

structural change.”¹⁵⁸ This means for purposes of considering a case study of German foreign policy such as Iran, embracing a constructivist theoretical perspective –i.e. the civilian power role concept– in analysis of the case, allows one to easily consider whether this prevailing understanding of post-unification Germany, explains its behaviour. Whereas rationalist viewpoints hold “political discourse serves to justify, not orient state action”, the credibility of constructivist tendencies remains inextricable from demonstrating not merely the existence of a rooted identity, but also, “demonstrat[ing] its effects” upon the orientation of policy.¹⁵⁹ For this reason, and as will be shown in the following chapter, the prevailing understanding within literature of post-unification Germany as a constructivist-inspired, civilian power, will be embraced as the theoretical lens through which to consider the relationship, amidst these wider, and critical debates.

With a proliferation of literature concerning the subject of potential normalisation, and questions regarding the enduring relevancy of norms and identity for post-unification Germany, analysis of Germany’s relationships in this context appears increasingly imperative. Moreover, notwithstanding a robust school of literature focusing on post-unification Germany, and its approaches to policy, most analytical and theoretical perspectives advanced concerning Germany, contextually premise themselves upon Germany’s foreign policy vis-à-vis the European Union, and European states, while neglecting to address case studies beyond this limited geographic scope. This limitation, in turn, raises profound questions regarding the extent to which scholarship can accurately capture broader German foreign policy dynamics, interests, and identity, from one region of policy focus. In other words, not only are these questions increasingly imperative, but there is a dire need for consideration of German foreign policy, identity, and interest, beyond the European geographic realm. For this reason, a case study such as German foreign policy towards Iran appears to offer a particularly valuable angle from which to consider these wider, and essential questions of post-unification Germany. But what does literature on Germany’s relationship with Iran suggest about its foreign policy, identity, and interest? And to what extent does this relationship appear to offer particular value in terms of addressing underlying explanations of German foreign policy?

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 271.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 276.

With these questions in mind, it is now appropriate to consider the body of literature directly addressing Germany's relationship with Iran, in order to demonstrate the unique value such a case study of German foreign policy, identity, and interest holds.

1.4 A Curious German Foreign Policy Towards Iran

According to literature on post-unification German foreign policy towards Iran, the relationship is exceptional in its indulgence,¹⁶⁰ and appears more akin to a "strange love affair."¹⁶¹ Notwithstanding a previously referenced understanding that a civilian power Germany is expected to avoid establishing close relationships with authoritarian governments, literature is nevertheless fairly unanimous in its understanding that Germany maintains so strong a desire to cultivate ties with Iran, that it constitutes a high-profile example of "disunity" amongst Western states concerning Iran policy.¹⁶² With starkly differing approaches in foreign policy towards Iran, such disunity has, in turn, engendered vocal opposition from the United States (U.S.) and other allies since unification, and complicated many of Germany's other relationships.¹⁶³ In this respect, when taken from the viewpoint of civilian power explanations of Germany, its desire to pursue close relations with Iran, including at the expense of anticipated norms of cooperation, leads one to ponder several key, and insufficiently resolved issues on the subject of German foreign policy towards Iran. These include: identifying the underlying interest behind Germany's cultivation of this particular relationship, and relatedly, determining the extent to which Germany's relationship with Iran, may in fact, challenge prevailing understandings of Germany, as an ostensibly constructivist-inspired, civilian power in its foreign policy, identity, and related interest. In this regard, at its most basic level, Germany's policy towards Iran is a particularly valuable case study to consider, in that at its essence, the relationship as presently characterised across literature, appears to largely problematize many core assumptions, and understandings of

¹⁶⁰ Seyyed Hossein Mousavian, *Iran-Europe Relations: Challenges and Opportunities* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 2-3.; Bernd Kaussler, "Iran-Europe Relations: Challenges and Opportunities," *Iranian Studies* 43, no. 4 (2010): 579.

¹⁶¹ Matthias Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold* (Candor: Telos Press Publishing, 2014), x.

¹⁶² Ibid., vii.

¹⁶³ Lane, 77-89.; Struwe, 3-5.; Reissner, 41.; Mousavian, 3.; Bergenäs, 491-503.

post-unification Germany, which similarly, factor in to wider, ongoing questions of German foreign policy, identity, and interest.

Despite sufficient accounts within literature to indicate a presently unrecognised, and unstated problematizing of Germany's civilian power role concept in this case, as noted by prominent scholars on the subject, academic literature on German foreign policy towards Iran, including its antecedents, remains strikingly limited.¹⁶⁴ In fact, prior to the publication of Seyyed Mousavian's seminal, albeit controversial text in the field, *Europe-Iran Relations: Challenges and Opportunities*, no substantive account of the contemporary relations between Germany and Iran appeared in any language.¹⁶⁵ This void is similarly noted by Matthias Küntzel, another prominent author on the subject, who posits that the publication of his critical text on the subject, constitutes a profoundly original investigation, in the absence of any "scholarly works" addressing the ties.¹⁶⁶ Notwithstanding recurrent allusion to gaps in literature on the subject, limitations to existing literature have largely endured over the years. Current academic works referencing the topic are principally restricted to a small number of books, and a handful of articles. Moreover, as a general trend, scholarship largely limits itself to addressing Germany's relationship with Tehran, from the perspective of broader, E.U. relations, and policy vis-à-vis Iran, including particular emphasis upon negotiations surrounding Iran's nuclear program¹⁶⁷ preceding the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).¹⁶⁸ In this manner, consideration of the relationship from the original perspective envisaged in this thesis, serves to add much needed analysis of a key relationship for Germany, which has largely escaped a bilateral level of analysis, and is yet to be considered in the valuable context of broader, fundamental debates concerning post-

¹⁶⁴ Mousavian, 2-3.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 3.

¹⁶⁶ Küntzel, xi.

¹⁶⁷ Shahriar Sabet-Saeidi, "Iranian-European Relations: A Strategic Partnership," in *Iran's Foreign Policy: From Khatami to Ahmadinejad*, ed. Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Mahjoob Zweiri (Ithaca: Ithaca Press, 2011).; Reissner, 33-50.; Maria do Céu Pinto, "Sanctioning Iran: Us-European Disputes over Policy Towards Iran," *The International Spectator* 36, no. 2 (2001): 101-10.; Riccardo Alcaro, "Learning from a Troubled Experience—Transatlantic Lessons from the Nuclear Standoff with Iran," *ibid.* 46, no. 4 (2011): 115-36.; Adebahr.; Shannon N Kile, *Europe and Iran: Perspectives on Non-Proliferation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).; Alcaro, *Europe and Iran's Nuclear Crisis: Lead Groups and Eu Foreign Policy-Making*.; Niklas Helwig, "Germany in European Diplomacy: Minilateralism as a Tool for Leadership," *German Politics* (2019).

¹⁶⁸ "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action," (Vienna 2015).

unification Germany, as a civilian power. That being said, how do existing accounts within literature explain Germany's policy towards Iran? Do these accounts suggest Germany conforms to, or diverges from civilian power expectations? And based upon present explanations, to what extent does the approach envisaged in this thesis represent a viable, and beneficial approach to considering the relationship?

To answer such questions, it is helpful to begin with emphasis upon the fact that literature pinpoints differing policies towards Iran in the years following German unification, as the source of fundamental strain upon Europe's relations with the United States.¹⁶⁹ Although the United States sought, in the words of Martin Indyk, to pursue a policy of "containment," towards Iran,¹⁷⁰ Germany and Europe instead developed a policy seen as a "rejection [of] the hard-line approach [...] by Washington [...] no matter how compelling the evidence of Iranian misbehavior."¹⁷¹ The manifestation of this rejection is consistently referenced within literature as "the European Union's policy," of [...] 'dialogue',¹⁷² in which rather than *contain*, or *isolate* Iran, Germany and its European partners sought *engagement*.¹⁷³ However, although literature has often chosen to frame the policy as multilateral, European, and noted its formation under the formal auspices of the European Union in 1992,¹⁷⁴ scholars have nevertheless acknowledged the profoundly bilateral nature of arrangements and relationships between Iran and individual European states, particularly Germany.¹⁷⁵ In this manner, there is clear recognition within accounts of Europe-Iran relations, that amidst Europe's inability to develop "a concerted [...] approach"¹⁷⁶ at critical junctures, policy was, in fact, often dealt with on a "unilateral basis",¹⁷⁷ meaning "bilateral initiatives were taken under the heading of 'critical dialogue',"¹⁷⁸ or other ostensibly multilateral forums, rather than actually occur as policies of cooperation. Moreover, and of profound significance, literature recognises

¹⁶⁹ Pinto, 101.; Lane, 77.; Reissner, 38.; Mousavian, 64-73.; Struwe, 3-6.; Küntzel, vi-viii.

¹⁷⁰ Martin Indyk, "The Clinton Administration's Approach to the Middle East" (paper presented at the Soref Symposium, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1993).

¹⁷¹ Pinto, 101.; Struwe, 3-6.

¹⁷² 3.; Pinto, 103.

¹⁷³ Lane, 77.

¹⁷⁴ European Council, "European Council in Edinburgh: Conclusions of the Presidency," (Edinburgh: European Commission, 1992), 96.

¹⁷⁵ Pinto, 103.; Reissner, 40.; Struwe, 23.

¹⁷⁶ Pinto, 102-03.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 103.

¹⁷⁸ Struwe, 23.

Germany as the principal force behind development of this allegedly “European” policy of dialogue, or engagement,¹⁷⁹ entailing patent German criticism at times towards European partners for not embracing its subjective policy stance,¹⁸⁰ and a general propensity of Germany to act distinctly more lenient towards Iran than “other EU member states.”¹⁸¹

In this regard, despite a tendency of literature to simply merge analysis of German policy towards Iran with that of Europe’s, many accounts nevertheless acknowledge this policy as emblematic of Germany’s personal interest, and subjective policy aims. The implication being: it is *Germany’s* foreign policy efforts towards Iran which engenders strain upon Germany’s relationship with the U.S., as well as Germany’s policy which ostensibly occurs with indifference to the state of Iranian behaviour. This not only evidences the particular necessity of considering Germany’s relations with Iran from a bilateral perspective, but it imperatively serves to highlight that if anything serves to problematize civilian power expectations of post-unification Germany in relations with Iran, this is highly attributable to its own policy efforts, rather than Europe’s. With this in mind, what does literature accordingly suggest regarding the rationale behind this distinctive approach spearheaded by Germany? And to what extent does literature suggest this approach reconciles with, or diverges from prevailing theoretical and analytical perspectives of German foreign policy, as a civilian power?

Critically, some accounts within literature attribute Germany’s choice of rejecting “isolation [...] and pursuing constructive engagement,” to a divergent, underlying “philosophy” towards international relations.¹⁸² For Charles Lane, such a philosophy conforms to an intrinsically German belief in the perceived efficacy of alternative methods of foreign policy, including Willy Brandt’s *Ostpolitik*.¹⁸³ According to this perspective, a policy of engagement is considered superior to “military and political containment”,¹⁸⁴ since isolation of states cannot induce change, as there is no promotion of, or exposure to the other state’s position on

¹⁷⁹ Reissner, 36.; Lane, 77-79.; Pinto, 106.

¹⁸⁰ Mousavian, 72.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 73.

¹⁸² Lane, 78.

¹⁸³ Ostpolitik, or “Neue Ostpolitik,” was a policy of engagement with eastern bloc states, implemented under German Chancellor Willy Brandt, and heavily influenced by Egon Bahr’s “Wandel durch Annäherung” (change through rapprochement). Klaus Schönhoven, “Der Lange Weg Zum Frieden,” *Die Zeit* 2013.

¹⁸⁴ Lane, 77-78.

issues.¹⁸⁵ In this respect, such a philosophy suggests there may be a normative impetus for Germany's policy towards Iran –both in its underlying philosophy and promotion of values– consistent with civilian power expectations. Consequently, although some accounts within literature imply a fundamental challenge to civilian power expectations –without actually referencing it as such– others, in fact, suggest Germany's interest in this relationship may be largely consistent with expectations of the civilian power role concept, including diplomacy, advancement of norms, and ultimately, non-rationalist, non-materialist aims.

Although literature in this manner has noted the perception of an underlying philosophical calculus behind Germany's foreign policy towards Iran, existing accounts have nevertheless failed to clearly define this philosophy in theoretical terms, or attempted to explain its relevancy to prevailing understandings of post-unification Germany. Despite literature appearing vague on the subject of underlying theoretical rationales, it does, critically, provide essential clues in this regard, by elaborating upon the policy differences of Germany and the U.S., concerning Iran.

According to some, Germany's policy aspired to provide a stage for addressing “areas of explicit concern,” including: human rights, terrorism, the Middle East peace process, as well as weapons proliferation and procurement,¹⁸⁶ in addition to “equally important [...] unstated goals,” such as attempting to engender political moderation in Iran through contact.¹⁸⁷ Thus, although some discern, and contend, German and U.S. aims ultimately strived to achieve similar goals, such as preventing nuclear proliferation, combating terrorism, and facilitating Middle East peace, the policy approaches are nonetheless considered within literature to fundamentally contrast with one another.¹⁸⁸ Attempting to explain these foundational dissimilarities, Matthias Struwe offers the most substantive advancements regarding any underlying theoretical components of the relationship, by framing this particular divergence in terms of contrasting understandings of foreign policy. For Struwe, not only does Germany's policy constitute a counter-position from the United States' more realist, and accordingly,

¹⁸⁵ Pinto, 103-09.

¹⁸⁶ Reissner, 33-35.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 35.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

rationalist approach towards Iran,¹⁸⁹ but many of its features appear more consistent with a *constructivist* understanding to foreign policy.¹⁹⁰ Expanding upon this interpretation, Struwe's account of Europe-Iran relations argues this dialogue-based approach aspired not only to engender moderation and facilitate regional peace efforts, but aimed to "persuade Iran to adhere to internationally accepted norms," particularly concerning improvement of human rights and rule of law.¹⁹¹ Consequently, for Struwe, the intent of such action predicated itself upon a non-rationalist, non-materialist determination to "make clear the EU did not tolerate Iranian human rights abuses [...] and help steer [Iran] [...] back into [...] the international community"¹⁹²—something he interprets as compelling evidence to corroborate an increasing relevancy of normative interests within Germany and Europe's respective foreign policy agendas.¹⁹³ In this respect, Struwe views *aspects* of Germany's relationship with Iran, as indicative of a constructivist interpretation of foreign policy, given his interpretation the policy sought to advance normative aims, under largely multilateral auspices,¹⁹⁴ through "dialogue [...] not by military or sanctionary pressure."¹⁹⁵ However, here again, one sees an understanding of Germany's policy, being inextricably linked by literature with that of Europe's. Struwe's investigation of the relationship does not exist on a bilateral level, and accordingly, it in no way attempts to explain Germany's relationship based upon prevailing understandings of a civilian power Germany. In this manner, and given Struwe addresses dialogue from a perspective that German and European policy efforts are, more or less, one and the same, it is both presumptuous, and hasty to embrace the validity of this explanation when considering Germany's personal relationship with Iran.

Moreover, and of profound significance, despite Struwe's inference of at least some normative considerations in Europe's contemporary approach towards Iran, as well as a perceived theoretical inability of traditional, rationalist interpretations to account for all such considerations,¹⁹⁶ he nevertheless finds his own hypothesis challenged by a relationship he

¹⁸⁹ Struwe, 7.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 7-10.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 20.

¹⁹² Ibid., 4.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 5.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 19.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 40.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 8.

concedes: “produced little tangible results” in normative realms, including human rights.¹⁹⁷ This, according to other accounts of the relationship, constitutes a profound challenge to critical dialogue, and by extension, the ostensible significance of normative interests behind such policy.¹⁹⁸ Although the efficacy of Germany’s strategy is less significant for this thesis than its underlying explanation, the inability of literature to demonstrate tangible, much less substantive examples of normatively-based results, has resultantly precipitated, and bestowed greater legitimacy to differing explanations of Germany’s interest in relations with Iran.

In addition to such challenges, other factors cited within literature as corroborating evidence for normative, and identity-based interests, have similarly faced notable criticism. For example, some contend Germany and Europe’s decision to temporarily cease a policy of dialogue –following the Iranian government’s implication in the killing of four individuals at a Berlin restaurant¹⁹⁹ – constitutes proof they were willing to sever ties on the basis of normative interests, when presented with incontrovertible evidence of Iranian misdeeds.²⁰⁰ However, others interpret this supposed proof point, as merely “symbolic” in nature, and highlight the inability of European states to forge a united front against Iran, “no matter how compelling the evidence”.²⁰¹ This resulted in the quick re-implementation of a dialogue, albeit under a new name,²⁰² and engendered claims of alleged moral indifference towards Iranian behaviour.²⁰³ In this manner, for differing accounts within literature, Germany’s policy actions on a given issue are seen to either problematize, or substantiate, normative interests behind the relationship. Accordingly, what this discrete example demonstrates, is that many supposed validations for a constructivist explanation, in fact, remain greatly disputed within literature. In this regard, notwithstanding a palpable sense across literature that explaining the relationship requires a fundamentally theoretical lens, the absence of clear theoretical expectations concerning Germany’s behaviour in its relationship with Iran, has allowed contradictory interpretations of events to emerge.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 3.

¹⁹⁸ Reissner, 37.

¹⁹⁹ Mousavian, 94.

²⁰⁰ Struwe, 22.

²⁰¹ Pinto, 101.

²⁰² Mousavian, 76.

²⁰³ Pinto, 101.

The implication of such ambiguity surrounding Germany's behaviour –in a theoretical sense– means that although some posit non-rationalist, non-materialist interests explain key aspects of the relationship, another prominent position within literature attributes a lack of progress in the area of human rights, and other normative dimensions of the relationship,²⁰⁴ to economic interests, and the related “unwillingness to use [...] economic ties to exert leverage.”²⁰⁵ Citing the fact Germany's contemporary relationship with Iran emerged from highly robust trade relations during the period preceding dialogue, and a belief these would only improve with time,²⁰⁶ this alternative perspective accordingly argues, it is, in fact, commercial and trade interests, that constitute the preeminent basis for establishing post-unification relations with Tehran,²⁰⁷ as opposed to normative, or identity-based interests. For such accounts, a nexus of trade, German credit guarantees, debt restructuring, and robust interest from prominent German firms to ink deals in Iran,²⁰⁸ is not only patently obvious, but its wider implication holds such interests supersede non-rationalist, non-materialist considerations, given the apparent “reluctan[ce] to threaten the use of an economic stick”.²⁰⁹ Thus, for some critical observers, far from affirming normative interests, German foreign policy towards Iran represents “a morally objectionable policy that is having little positive impact on Iran.”²¹⁰

Overall, this alternative interpretation of the relationship suggests a more rationalist, or materialist explanation of Germany's foreign policy towards Iran –rather than a constructivist one– and in doing so, serves to further highlight the critical manner in which a dichotomy of interpretations concerning the relationship, has emerged along fundamentally theoretical lines. In this manner, what literature makes clear, is that explaining the relationship, and resolving the dichotomy, requires consideration from an original perspective: one of Germany's underlying theoretical and analytical rationale, as well as corresponding interest.

²⁰⁴ Reissner, 37.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 38.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 36.

²⁰⁷ Bergenäs, 500-02.; Reissner, 36.

²⁰⁸ Lane, 77-82.

²⁰⁹ Reissner, 39.

²¹⁰ Lane, 79.

This is particularly imperative, given that at the essence of this unresolved dichotomy concerning Germany's relationship with Iran, is a potential problematizing of prevailing understandings of Germany as a constructivist-inspired, civilian power. In this regard, the unique approach of this thesis is not only original, and ideal for resolving the contradictions inherent in existing accounts, but essential, in that the essence of ongoing debates concerning this relationship, fundamentally mirror wider debates of significance for post-unification Germany. Consequently, approaching the relationship from this perspective will further allow for consideration of the manner in which this particular case study of post-unification German foreign policy, identity, and interest, may, in fact, challenge prevailing understandings of Germany.

Conclusion

As evidenced by this chapter, although existing literature establishes essential progressions in knowledge concerning both post-unification Germany in general, and its relationship with Iran specifically, imperative gaps to these areas endure, which hold wider implication for existing thought on Germany.

This chapter began by demonstrating how prevailing explanations of post-unification Germany are viewed as largely consistent with a constructivist account of foreign policy, rather than a rationalist, or materialist one. By first presenting the differences inherent in these theoretical, and analytical perspectives, and later, addressing their pertinence to present understandings of post-unification Germany, the chapter evidenced that a constructivist explanation of foreign policy, ostensibly underpins Germany, and its identity, as a civilian power. Expanding upon this, the chapter ultimately demonstrated that a constructivist-inspired, civilian power role concept, constitutes the prevailing understanding of post-unification German foreign policy, identity, as well as interest, and accordingly, ostensibly serves to account for Germany's behaviour in clearly identifiable ways. With this in mind, the chapter further established that as the prevailing explanation of post-unification Germany, a constructivist-inspired, civilian role concept represents a clear, and efficacious theoretical framework for this thesis.

Despite the prevalence of this understanding, the chapter critically evidenced that a preeminent, and fundamental question has emerged within literature on Germany, concerning whether this explanation, does in fact, remain consistent with German foreign policy and interest, or, if there is a process of normalisation occurring. In this regard, consideration of existing literature on the subject demonstrated that approaching case studies of German foreign policy from the prevailing, civilian power explanation of post-unification Germany, remains imperative, and will make a valuable contribution to a growing body of literature concerned with this fundamental question.

Having established the importance, and efficacy of this approach, the chapter then evidenced how the case study of German foreign policy towards Iran is not only profoundly under-evaluated, but particularly well suited to this wider question of ostensible continuity as a civilian power. The chapter indicated that not only has literature failed to adequately approach the relationship from the perspective of Germany –preferring to consider it at a multilateral level, and with focus on nuclear negotiations– but no accounts to date have meaningfully addressed the underlying theoretical explanation of the relationship, and certainly not from the perspective of prevailing theoretical explanations of post-unification Germany, as a constructivist-inspired, civilian power. As shown, this gap within existing literature is of particular implication, in that notwithstanding an inability of current accounts within literature to explain Germany’s relationship from a theoretical perspective, literature nevertheless indicates contradictory, and antithetical explanations of the relationship have emerged along fundamentally theoretical lines. One perspective suggests an affirmation of constructivist assumptions, meanwhile another bespeaks a validation of rationalist and materialist explanations. In other words, not only is this unresolved dichotomy of explanations, at its essence theoretical, but the theoretical dispute regarding German foreign policy towards Iran, mirrors the wider, and fundamental question of continuity in post-unification German foreign policy, as a civilian power.

In this manner, not only is the originality of this thesis apparent, but the particular value, and broader, potential impact of the approach, as well. In approaching this relationship as such, not only will this thesis overcome present contradictions in literature concerning the relationship –through contextual understanding of the relationship’s features– but in doing so,

it will be possible to comment upon the wider issue of Germany's civilian power status in this case, by means of a wholly original perspective.

But bearing in mind this chapter identified the civilian power role concept as the prevailing understanding of post-unification Germany, and in turn, the theoretical framework underlying this thesis, what approach and methodology should be utilised for such an investigation? Moreover, how, precisely, would this theoretical framework be operationalised for those purposes? To answer these questions, it is now necessary to turn to consideration of the theoretical framework and methodology.

Chapter Two: A Methodology and Theoretical Framework

Introduction

In the preceding chapter, it was established that leading characterisations and understandings of post-unification German foreign policy, identity, and interest, are best captured by Germany's orientation as a *civilian power*. Nevertheless, within literature concerning Germany's relationship with Iran, it was noted two distinctive, and presently conflicting interpretations of Germany's interest in relations exist. Specifically, this conflict was evidenced to suggest a problematizing of Germany's ostensible foreign policy, identity, and interest, as a civilian power, and in doing so, it indicated the relationship's unresolved contradictions mirror wider debates concerning post-unification Germany. Accordingly, it appears the key to both resolving this present dichotomy, and explaining the relationship from a perspective of critical value, is at its essence, based upon determining the impetus of Germany's relationship, and the extent to which this may problematize assumptions of post-unification Germany. In other words: does the relationship appear consistent with, or divergent from, assumptions of German foreign policy, identity, and interest, as a civilian power? By answering this question, it then becomes possible not only to better understand the relationship amidst conflicting interpretations, but further, to consider how this puzzling, single-case study of German foreign policy, fits within a wider field of thought concerning post-unification Germany.

With this in mind, it is clear from the preceding chapter, that a constructivist-inspired, civilian power role concept constitutes the theoretical framework of this study. However, with both that key premise, as well as broader intentions stated, to what extent is such an undertaking feasible? How would a study be approached and implemented to reach these ends? And what kind of methodology –alongside this theoretical framework– would underpin an investigation into Germany's relationship with Iran? Taking these essential considerations into account, the following chapter aspires to demonstrate how a qualitative investigation of Germany's relationship with Iran can be implemented to address the research questions of

this thesis. Specifically, it will show that by considering whether outcomes of the relationship conform with clearly identifiable expectations of Germany as a committed civilian power, this research project is not only feasible, but fundamentally optimal for addressing its questions of interest, and explanation.

To demonstrate this, the chapter will firstly establish basic parameters of the research project, by explicitly considering the research questions and commenting upon the efficacy of a single-case study in qualitative investigations. After determining these essential parameters, it then aims to show how a process-tracing methodology is ideally suited to address the questions and aims of this thesis, by not only leveraging consideration of narratives and discourse, but above all, through comparison of evidenced outcomes against diagnostic criteria. In this regard, by having already established the underlying theoretical framework in the preceding chapter, chapter two will actually begin with consideration of the methodology, before expanding upon the preceding chapter's illumination of constructivism –which as previously noted, is the analytical perspective underlying a civilian power role concept.²¹¹ Following this, the chapter will further address the civilian power role concept itself, by showing how four distinct facets of the constructivist-variant, civilian power interpretation of Germany, allow for clear identification of expected role behaviour criteria, in accordance with the diagnostic approach of a process-tracing methodology. Although unorthodox, this is why articulation of the methodology necessary proceeds further consideration of the constructivist-inspired, civilian power role concept within this chapter.

Ultimately, through this wholly original approach to considering Germany's relationship with Iran, the chapter will show determining Germany's conformance with civilian power expectations is possible, and in doing so, this will address the research aims of this thesis, and finally resolve existing differences of opinion concerning Germany's relationship with Iran.

2.1 Questions, Causality, and a Single-Case Study

²¹¹ Refer to chapter one.

Given the myriad questions, themes, and debates surrounding Germany's relationship with Iran, it is helpful to begin by clarifying the specific research questions of this study, as well as articulating how the various parts of this investigation are conceptualised to address these questions. In this manner, it is vital to note, for purposes of this study, the timeframe will be limited to the period between German unification in 1990, and the United States' decision to withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2018. This time period not only captures the essence of post-unification Germany's policy efforts towards Iran, but it prevents one from drawing definitive conclusions from ongoing negotiations, which may, in fact, merely reflect political posturing, rather than signify actual policy. Additionally, it should be noted, that aside from mentioning its intersections with Germany's behaviour and interest at a bilateral level of relations, this thesis will not meaningfully address negotiations over Iran's nuclear program within the aforementioned timeframe. Such negotiations are in many respects distinct, and an intrinsically multilateral extension of Germany's relationship with Iran, rather than an aspect of its personal relationship –which remains the focus in this study.

With these imperative considerations said, as noted in the introduction, there are two research questions guiding this thesis –one primary research question, and another secondary– with the latter of these two ultimately serving to address the primary question.

Firstly, the primary question inquires:

- *To what extent does Germany's bilateral relationship with Iran challenge fundamental assumptions of contemporary German foreign policy, identity, and interest (as encapsulated by the civilian power role concept)?*

However, in order to answer this, one must recognise both the essence of this question, as well as the basis of existing differences in understandings of the relationship, ultimately rest upon how one *explains* Germany's interest, and corresponding policy behaviour. Critically, as established in chapter one, and as will be evidenced in-depth later in this chapter, there is an assumed causal relationship between Germany's *identity* as a civilian power, and *interest* formation, which in turn, ostensibly *explains*, or accounts for, post-unification German foreign

policy.²¹² Thus, to determine whether this relationship confirms, or challenges such assumptions of German foreign policy, identity, and interest, this necessitates upgrading or downgrading confidence in an explanation consistent with such assumptions, and a true explanation must always concern itself with *causality* behind a phenomenon.²¹³ With this in mind, to consider whether the cause of Germany's relationship is consistent with, or divergent from, fundamental assumptions underlying post-unification Germany, the secondary question of this study, and the one structuring the investigation, asks:

- *How does one explain post-unification Germany's bilateral relationship with Iran?*

In other words, what impetus accounts for Germany's desire to cultivate a "strange love affair"²¹⁴ of intimate ties with Iran, which appear to challenge key assumptions of post-unification Germany?

Bearing these questions and overall ambitions in mind, it is critical to appreciate two fundamental facts concerning the design of this research project. Firstly, a methodology is needed for this thesis which can address underlying causality in Germany's relationship with Iran, and secondly, it must be consistent with the theoretical framework of this thesis –a constructivist-variant civilian power role concept.

In this manner, it is imperative to caution this thesis neither aspires to test the validity of constructivism, nor the civilian power role concept itself. Rather, it aims to consider if such a concept can, indeed, explain a particular case of German foreign policy, with assumed validity in mind. In approaching it as such, this thesis is pursuing a *single-case study*, which means considering whether outcomes and narratives of a particular case, appear consistent with expectations.²¹⁵ This means assumed validity of the civilian power role concept is necessary, given that for such an investigation, "validity of [a theory's] assumptions" is not the concern per se, rather it ponders: does the concept of interest in this case "operate if the conditions that it claims to require for its operation are present?"²¹⁶ But to what extent might such an

²¹² Refer to chapter one.

²¹³ Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 15.

²¹⁴ Küntzel, x.

²¹⁵ Van Evera, 29.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 39.

approach appear limited? And what form of methodology can be implemented to achieve these ambitions? Helpfully, by considering the potential shortcomings and strengths of this approach, a potential methodology of interest emerges.

While it would appear this approach to a single-case study is ideal for addressing the research questions, it is critical to note, case studies often face criticism for alleged “weakness of [...] methods”, and come with a caveat that a discrete case study “cannot be generalised to other cases”.²¹⁷ These are important limitations to consider. Yet, it is helpful to note, this thesis does not aspire to make generalisations that other cases of German foreign policy are interpretable based upon the results of this specific relationship. What it does aspire to, is explanation of a particular case, albeit one that potentially stands to impact wider assumptions concerning post-unification Germany. Thus, although concerns about strength may exist in terms of certain research aims, it is nevertheless helpful to recognise the key strength of single-case investigations exists in the very “within case” analysis being sought in this study, particularly if a “process tracing methodology”²¹⁸ can be utilised. In this regard, it is from the possible limitations of such an approach, that one in fact recognises a potential methodology of value. But although the research aims of this thesis suggest a single-case analysis is a strong approach, what exactly is a process-tracing methodology, and does such a methodology truly fit the ambitions of this research project? To consider this matter, it is therefore necessary to turn attention towards the methodology itself.

2.2 A Process-Tracing Methodology

Finding its antecedents in cognitive psychology,²¹⁹ *process-tracing* represents a prominent approach in social science to “explain a particularly interesting and puzzling outcome”,²²⁰ for qualitative research projects.²²¹ With such aspirations in mind, this methodology is considered ideally suited for developing compelling explanations of single-case studies,²²² by facilitating

²¹⁷ Ibid., 50-54.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T Checkel, *Process Tracing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 5.

²²⁰ Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen, *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), Location 393 (electronic version).

²²¹ David Collier, "Understanding Process Tracing," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 44, no. 4 (2011): 823.

²²² Bennett and Checkel, 28.; Beach and Pedersen, Location 127 (electronic version).; Van Evera, 47.

“strong within case inferences [...] not possible with other [...] methods”.²²³ At a basic, fundamental level, it seeks “evidence that a given stimulus caused a given response”,²²⁴ or, in other words, that something served to “produce an outcome” of interest.²²⁵ By considering a particular component within a wider “causal mechanism”, or “complex system, which produces an outcome by the interaction of [...] parts”,²²⁶ a process-tracing methodology works to “update the degree of confidence [...] a theorised”²²⁷ causality produced the outcome under consideration.²²⁸ Critically, this means the operative word for process-tracing is *causality*, just as it is for purposes of addressing the secondary research question of this thesis. However, in order for process-tracing to develop compelling explanations of a single-case of interest, this necessitates considering evidence “to make inferences about causal explanations of that case”.²²⁹ Thus, researchers implementing a process-tracing methodology are actively weighing evidence from a case to determine whether a hypothesised causal mechanism in fact accounts for the known outcome.²³⁰ In doing so, process-tracing is, at its essence, fundamentally an effort to evidence a hypothesised “causal mechanism in action”,²³¹ does *explain* the outcome of interest.

Considering this thesis ultimately seeks to develop a compelling explanation behind a puzzling case of German foreign policy, through within-case analysis of causality, it would therefore appear that a process tracing methodology is strikingly consistent with the research project’s aims. But in order to fully establish the appropriateness of such a methodology, it remains imperative to demonstrate the methodology is epistemologically and ontologically consistent with the aspirations, assumptions, and approach of this study.

2.2.1 The Explaining-Outcome Approach

²²³ Beach and Pedersen, Location 127 (electronic version).

²²⁴ Van Evera, 65.

²²⁵ Beach and Pedersen, Location 661 (electronic version).

²²⁶ Stuart S. Glennan, "Mechanisms and the Nature of Causation," *Erkenntnis* 44, no. 1 (1996): 49-52.

²²⁷ Beach and Pedersen, Location 116 (electronic version).

²²⁸ Ibid., Location 472 (electronic version).

²²⁹ Bennett and Checkel, 4.; Andrew Bennett, "Process Tracing and Causal Inference," (2010): 1.

²³⁰ Bennett and Checkel, 7.

²³¹ Ibid., 9.

In consideration of such consistencies, it is firstly critical to recognise there are, in fact, three forms of process-tracing –all with different ambitions. Best characterised as “theory-testing”, “theory-building”, and “explaining-outcome process tracing”,²³² of these three variants –and given this thesis aspires to explain a puzzling outcome, rather than test the wider validity of an existing theory, or construct a new one– the explaining-outcome process-tracing methodology is the most appropriate for this study. Rather than concern itself with ambitions of a purely theoretical nature, the explaining-outcome approach instead operates “to craft a minimally sufficient explanation of a puzzling outcome in a specific [...] case”,²³³ by “account[ing] for all the important aspects of an outcome with no redundant parts”.²³⁴

Once again, such a definition appears highly consistent with the overall approach being utilised in this thesis. Nevertheless, a potential challenge to embracing this methodology appears, in that process-tracing is often viewed as consistent with “scientific realism”, which is closely related to a positivist epistemology.²³⁵ This point is quite significant, considering this chapter previously reiterated the necessity of embracing a theoretical framework adhering to a constructivist-inspired, civilian power role concept, and such a theoretical framework remains intrinsically non-positivist by nature.²³⁶ It would therefore appear on the surface, that a compatibility issue may exist for utilizing a process-tracing methodology. However, of profound significance, it is also recognised that a case-explaining form of process-tracing, holds “ambitions [that] are more case-centric than theory-oriented”.²³⁷ This means, in contrast with the other two forms of process-tracing –which embrace a “neo-positivist and critical realist” epistemology and ontology– the explaining-outcome form possesses an entirely “different ontological understanding”²³⁸ altogether, since the interest is limited to explaining a particular case.²³⁹ Hence, although certain forms of a process-tracing methodology may present compatibility issues with this study, the particular form of process-tracing being utilised, fortunately mitigates such an issue.

²³² Beach and Pedersen, Location 138-48 (electronic version).

²³³ Ibid., Location 404 (electronic version).

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Bennett and Checkel, 10-14.

²³⁶ Adler, 320.

²³⁷ Beach and Pedersen, Location 148 (electronic version).

²³⁸ Ibid., Location 273-96 (electronic version).

²³⁹ Ibid., Location 404 (electronic version).

In fact, for within-case, process-tracing, this form is even noted to embrace a belief that “events [...] are [...] social constructions [...] they are not simply given [...] but defined by our concepts, and much contestation”.²⁴⁰ In accepting this belief, a case-explaining form of process-tracing adheres to a non-positivist belief that non-observable causal forces,²⁴¹ particularly of a social nature,²⁴² occur, and are often arrived at through contestation. This is significant not only in its obvious, non-positivist sense, but further suggests particular compatibility between a process-tracing methodology and constructivism, in that it recognises the causal capacity of ideas,²⁴³ particularly emergent from historical lessons, in accounting for outcomes beyond the scope of rationalist or materialist explanation.²⁴⁴ The significance of this point cannot be emphasised enough, given that as the preceding chapter noted, and will also be elaborated upon further in this chapter, ideas remain at the core of any constructivist, and relatedly, civilian power role concept explanation.²⁴⁵ With this in mind, process-tracing methodologists have ultimately recognised a particular basis of compatibility with constructivist assumptions, in that “we do not [directly] observe causal mechanisms [...] we make inferences” about them to establish “confidence”, and since “constructivis[m] [...] aspire[s] to causal explanation [...] [,] process tracing [indeed] figures prominently in [...] conventional constructivis[m]”.²⁴⁶

Indeed, this is very encouraging for purposes of determining a process-tracing methodology’s appropriateness, as it would appear process-tracing methodologists do not surmise any substantive conflict with the constructivist assumptions underpinning this study’s theoretical framework, should a case-explaining form be utilised. However, it is further important to acknowledge, the notion of causality itself is sometimes considered a challenge to constructivism. In fact, it is stated by some that embracing a constructivist theoretical

²⁴⁰ Bennett and Checkel, 8.

²⁴¹ Alexander L George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 137.

²⁴² Collier, 824.

²⁴³ Beach and Pedersen, Location 1020 (electronic version).; Alan Jacobs, “Process Tracing the Effects of Ideas,” in *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool (Strategies for Social Inquiry)*, ed. Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T Checkel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 47.

²⁴⁴ 42-47.

²⁴⁵ Refer to chapter one.

²⁴⁶ Bennett and Checkel, 10.

framework effectively transfers focus “from the causes of state action — interests — to the nature, or constitution, of such interests.”²⁴⁷ With this in mind, it might appear a fundamental conflict arises between a methodology seeking to ascertain underlying causality, and one utilizing a constructivist framework. Yet, if this is accurate, how does one explain the noted ability to seek causal explanations with process-tracing for constructivist accounts? Critically, to this point, the very notion and definition of causality in a process-tracing sense, and relatedly, this thesis, “differs from [...] other understanding[s] of causality [...] prevalent in social science.”²⁴⁸ In this sense, it is vital to clarify the ambitions of determining causality comes after such constitutive processes occur, meaning although constructivism is indeed constitutive —as will be detailed later in this chapter— the interest in causal dynamics with this methodology is one that occurs in a different sense altogether. Instead, it is essentially seeking to establish the causal effects of something already constituted. Thus, although a divide between constitutive and causal may be advanced in a context other than its meaning here, it is stated by prominent constructivists, that ultimately, notwithstanding the constitutive process, “constructivism subscribes to a notion of [...] causality” in that the constitutive interest is operationalised as a causal force in effect,²⁴⁹ just as this methodology premises itself. Consequently, in regards to epistemological and ontological appropriateness underlying this methodology, it is essential to recognise constructivism “endorse[s] the scientific project” of weighing evidence of outcomes against theoretical perspectives in a causal sense, it just necessitates establishing a clear *understanding*.²⁵⁰ The significance of such an *understanding* will be addressed later in this chapter, but for purposes of determining the appropriateness of this methodology, despite a sometimes assumed positivist orientation to “explanation and understanding”,²⁵¹ in this particular case, there is no discernible challenge in the intersection between the methodology of interest, and the theoretical framework to be further elaborated upon.

²⁴⁷ Alcaro, *Europe and Iran's Nuclear Crisis: Lead Groups and Eu Foreign Policy-Making*, Location 1152 (electronic version).

²⁴⁸ Beach and Pedersen, Location 462 (electronic version).

²⁴⁹ Adler, 329.

²⁵⁰ Alexander Wendt, "Constructing International Politics," *International Security* 20, no. 1 (1995): 75.

²⁵¹ "On Constitution and Causation in International Relations," *Review of international studies* 24, no. 5 (1998): 101-02.

Bearing these characterisations and stipulations in mind, it appears from an epistemological and ontological standpoint, a process-tracing methodology not only works in this case, but exhibits many surprising parallels with a constructivist theoretical framework, including an interest in explaining beyond the scope of rational choice theoretical and analytical perspectives.²⁵² It would therefore appear, despite potential challenges, given this “case-centric” process-tracing variant seeks to determine the most compelling explanation of a discrete case within a socially contested world²⁵³, otherwise legitimate concern over limitations, such as generalisability to other cases, or epistemological and ontological aspects, do not manifest themselves in this investigation of Germany’s relationship with Iran. Having said that, given a particular form of process tracing has been identified, and deemed appropriate, how would a researcher actually operationalise and implement this methodology to achieve the research goals? What steps and methods are involved? And how are these utilised to reach well-evidenced findings?

2.2.2 Implementing the Methodology

To address such questions, this section intends to outline the key processes and methods of relevance to process-tracing in this study. Specifically, this thesis envisages a five-step plan to implement the methodology, and by presenting these steps, it will then be possible to understand how this methodology allows for well-evidenced findings that support the research aims and questions herein. With that in mind, the first key step in implementing an explaining-outcome, process-tracing methodology, simply necessitates stating what the case is.²⁵⁴ In this particular instance: post-unification Germany’s curious relationship with Iran. Although this may appear overly logical, in a fundamental sense of causality, one must clearly recognise and define the *effect* itself, before one can attempt to pinpoint a causal mechanism in action.²⁵⁵ Once the case is clearly stated, the second step of an explaining-outcome approach, requires a substantive investigation of secondary literature.²⁵⁶ This critical step occurs not only to better understand and define the puzzling outcome itself, but importantly, to identify any

²⁵² Bennett and Checkel, 6.

²⁵³ Beach and Pedersen, Location 306 (electronic version).

²⁵⁴ Ibid., Location 986.

²⁵⁵ Glennan, 52.

²⁵⁶ Beach and Pedersen, Location 2663 (electronic version).

previously recognised causal mechanisms,²⁵⁷ or causal theories, that may be capable of explaining the case.²⁵⁸ As an explaining-outcome, process-tracing methodology inherently features a theory of causation,²⁵⁹ this means hypothesised causes exist within the facts of the case itself, and identifying a potential cause is essential for the third step. In this particular case, the hypothesised theory of causation was identified in the form of the civilian power role concept, which as the prevailing explanation of post-unification Germany, similarly constitutes the theoretical framework of this study.

Once a hypothesised causality is noted, an imperative third step involves the clear statement of assumptions and expectations based upon this hypothesised theory of causation, including potential counterfactuals.²⁶⁰ This means a well-specified conceptual framework for the hypothesis is necessary, in order to “defin[e] [...] central concepts [...] form[ing] the basis for theoretical propositions”.²⁶¹ Importantly, in a case where ideational factors are ostensibly involved in causation –as in this case– specifying expectations is even more important, so as to better evidence how these ideas may have operated, or failed to operate, in producing the outcome.²⁶² By identifying and stating these assumptions, this in turn, allows for the critical establishment of more “case-specific observable implications”,²⁶³ which establish what will occur if a hypothesised causal explanation is indeed true.²⁶⁴ In other words, this third step begins with a clear “conceptualisation of the mechanism[‘s]”²⁶⁵ more generalised assumptions, but ultimately, culminates in a highly-specified statement of expectations in the form of *diagnostic evidence*, or *diagnostic criteria*.²⁶⁶ This is why –bearing in mind chapter one already established that a constructivist-inspired, civilian power role concept is the theoretical framework for this study– it was essential to articulate the appropriate methodology, before returning to deeper consideration of the theoretical framework. The embraced theoretical framework must be operationalised in the form of diagnostic criteria, and the importance of

²⁵⁷ Ibid., Location 1222 (electronic version).

²⁵⁸ Bennett and Checkel, 18.

²⁵⁹ Beach and Pedersen, Location 2921 (electronic version).

²⁶⁰ Collier, 825.

²⁶¹ Beach and Pedersen, Location 876 (electronic version).

²⁶² Jacobs, 41-48.

²⁶³ Bennett and Checkel, 18.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 30.

²⁶⁵ Beach and Pedersen, Location 427 (electronic version).

²⁶⁶ Collier, 823.; Beach and Pedersen, Location 262 (electronic version).; Bennett, 2.

this approach can only be understood from consideration of the methodology. The notion of diagnostic criteria is fundamental to process-tracing, in that by establishing very clear diagnostic expectations as part of this step, researchers are later able to determine the validity of a hypothesised explanation, similar to how a physician makes medical diagnoses: through comparison of observable symptoms, against diagnostic criteria.²⁶⁷ Based upon this approach, a crucial implication is: with greater specificity of diagnostic criteria, there is increased accuracy of the methodology, because it allows researchers to diagnose based upon very distinct observable symptoms,²⁶⁸ when the methodology runs *tests*²⁶⁹ of “hypothesised causes and observed effects”²⁷⁰ for research questions of interest.²⁷¹ In approaching it this way, a testing of causality effectively determines whether “theory-based predictions for what we should see in the empirical record are matched in reality”,²⁷² and evidence that contradicts expectations, or supports counterfactuals, would serve to downgrade confidence in such an explanation.²⁷³

Once expectations and diagnostic criteria are noted, the methodology’s fourth step involves “mak[ing] an inferential leap” from the observed events of the case, to draw conclusions regarding the causality.²⁷⁴ This means there needs to be a consideration of evidence in order to reasonably justify a leap, by which the process leverages something known as *Bayesian logic*.²⁷⁵ Succinctly put, Bayesian logic constitutes a “logic of inference”, whereby evidence from a case can be utilised to either upgrade, or downgrade confidence in a potential explanation.²⁷⁶ This is where the value of having previously established diagnostic criteria becomes apparent, in that a Bayesian logic approach posits, if “a strong match between predicted and found evidence” is evident, then it is possible to draw an inference with a high “degree of confidence”, that indeed, the hypothesised explanation is valid.²⁷⁷ Thus, although it

²⁶⁷ 2.

²⁶⁸ Jacobs, 42.

²⁶⁹ Beach and Pedersen, Location 183 (electronic version).

²⁷⁰ Bennett and Checkel, 7.

²⁷¹ Collier, 823.

²⁷² Beach and Pedersen, Location 1878 (electronic version).

²⁷³ Bennett and Checkel, 19.; Collier, 825.

²⁷⁴ Beach and Pedersen, Location 1308 (electronic version).

²⁷⁵ Ibid., Location 1572 (electronic version).; Bennett and Checkel, 16.

²⁷⁶ Beach and Pedersen, Location 216 (electronic version). Bennett and Checkel, 16.

²⁷⁷ Beach and Pedersen, Location 228 (electronic version).

is never truly possible to determine with one-hundred percent certainty that a given cause was responsible²⁷⁸ –particularly when embracing a non-positivist approach as this thesis does– based upon a Bayesian logic, compelling conclusions regarding a hypothesised causality are nevertheless attainable, by relying upon the “probative value of evidence”,²⁷⁹ to “empirically validate” the underlying theory involved.²⁸⁰ Consequently, for process-tracing, “update[ing] [...] confidence in [...] the hypothesi[s]”²⁸¹ by demonstrating a “non-trivial causal effect”,²⁸² necessitates quality evidence,²⁸³ which can legitimise a leap through Bayesian logic. This means diagnostic criteria are not simply being considered against circumstantial evidence, or in an ill-defined manner, as this would hardly instil confidence in the findings of this study. Instead, the methodology strives to “maximise [...] inferential [...] power” by leveraging substantive empirical evidence –in this case: clear observable events and outcomes, as well as discourse– to establish higher degrees of confidence in the findings.²⁸⁴

With this in mind, it is essential to consider both the form of evidence being utilised, and its value for this study. The investigation of empirical evidence, such as “archival documents, interview transcripts” and similar forms²⁸⁵ of *primary source evidence* –which ostensibly reflect the views and policies of participants–²⁸⁶ will naturally be central to this end. Although *secondary evidence* –such as accounts within existing literature– remain particularly valuable for explaining the outcome²⁸⁷ in this case, it is nevertheless important to expand upon a specific, core aspect of evidence in this case-explaining methodology. Specifically, how it seeks to leverage *discourse*, to further the evidentiary value of its findings. For process-tracing, it is noted empirical evidence concerning a hypothesised causality, often exists within discourse, such as speeches,²⁸⁸ as well as official policy documents, which can then allow for contextual interpretation.²⁸⁹ Consequently, although this thesis does not aspire to conduct Discourse

²⁷⁸ Ibid., Location 1583 (electronic version).

²⁷⁹ Bennett and Checkel, 16.

²⁸⁰ Beach and Pedersen, Location 1248 (electronic version).

²⁸¹ Ibid., Location 1440 (electronic version).

²⁸² Ibid., Location 1427 (electronic version).

²⁸³ Ibid., Location 1394 (electronic version).

²⁸⁴ Ibid., Location 1821 (electronic version).

²⁸⁵ George and Bennett, 6.

²⁸⁶ Beach and Pedersen, Location 2480 (electronic version).

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., Location 1394 (electronic version).

²⁸⁹ Ibid., Locations 2342-641 (electronic version).

Analysis in a technical sense of the term, or limit its empirical evidence to discourse alone, before discussing the fifth, and final step of this case-explaining methodology in action (sufficiency), it is important to briefly consider the unique value derived from discourse, and how this may increase confidence in the findings of this thesis.

2.2.3 Discourse as Evidence in Process-Tracing

Critically, in a general, non-process-tracing-specific sense, discourse, including policy debates, remain helpful when investigating a potential explanation for a case,²⁹⁰ because discourses of a policy nature are believed to “produce [...] the common sense of [...] phenomena and [...] how public officials should act”.²⁹¹ In this manner, just as with a constructivist explanation of foreign policy,²⁹² there is a presumed *logic of appropriateness* intrinsic to policy discourse, and based upon this, discourse of a political nature effectively serves to “structure the spectrum of foreign policy opinion within a country”.²⁹³ In doing so, political discourse not only operates as a constraining force on foreign policy choices,²⁹⁴ and establishes limitations, but also, critically, “foreshadows state behavior”.²⁹⁵ As a result, “narratives that involve analysis of agents and their reasons” are accordingly considered valuable evidence for questions of underlying *causation* in state action.²⁹⁶

Importantly, a political discourse manifest as such, is not only helpful for evidencing underlying causality, but does so based upon a “structure of meaning”,²⁹⁷ which “interprets the world” beyond the scope of material explanation alone.²⁹⁸ The implication of this point is significant, in that discourse, as a form of evidence, and key component of this methodology, reflects an acceptance of evidentiary value beyond positivist assumptions,²⁹⁹ and one focused

²⁹⁰ Van Evera, 26.

²⁹¹ Jennifer Milliken, "The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods," *European journal of international relations* 5, no. 2 (1999): 229.

²⁹² Refer to chapter one.

²⁹³ Hellmann, "The Sirens of Power and German Foreign Policy: Who Is Listening?," 43.

²⁹⁴ Henrik Larsen, *Foreign Policy and Discourse Analysis: France, Britain and Europe* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 20.

²⁹⁵ Gunther Hellmann, "Goodbye Bismarck? The Foreign Policy of Contemporary Germany," *Mershon International Studies Review* 40 (1996): 2-21.

²⁹⁶ Adler, 329.

²⁹⁷ Larsen, 26.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 23.

²⁹⁹ Milliken, 226-27.

upon the causal effect of “language and [...] beliefs”.³⁰⁰ Thus, *ideas*, and related beliefs, or *understanding*,³⁰¹ remain central to explanation, because discourse evidences how factors such as invocation of a historical narrative,³⁰² as well as social interaction, are directly related to accounting for actions.³⁰³ After all, language, as the fundamental aspect of discourse, is intrinsically social, and therefore derives its meaning based upon a social component.³⁰⁴ Ultimately, by embracing these assumptions, discourse as a form of evidence, mirrors core beliefs central to constructivism, as established in the preceding chapter.

But although this is both helpful, and essential to consider, to what extent can a researcher expect discourse to evidence causation of an ideational and social nature, given speakers, and sources are individuals themselves? This concern is imperative, as one of the greatest challenges to discourse as evidence, is a belief that statements may contain the bias of a speaker’s individual opinions, therefore concealing actual motivations,³⁰⁵ and accordingly, fail to accurately explain a case. This concern is most prominently advanced from rationalist perspectives, which point out there may be inherent value in misleading others at times,³⁰⁶ meaning discourse necessitates a degree of scepticism in terms of evidence.³⁰⁷ Taking these challenges into account, however, it is also critical to recognise much of the alleged weakness inherent in discourse as evidence, emerges from a researcher’s focus upon “individual beliefs” rather than a crucial “totality of the beliefs”, within their context.³⁰⁸ In other words, if the weakness of discourse is largely a consequence of focusing upon individual, rather than social beliefs, then seeking discourse from a socially-focused sphere can increase the confidence of such narratives. Helpfully, in this regard, and particularly so in the case of post-unification Germany, it is noted that analysis of German policy discourse in the *Bundestag*, and other government policy documents –as will be utilised to evidence discourse throughout this thesis– are quite effective at capturing the essence of wider policy positions for researchers,

³⁰⁰ Larsen, 1.

³⁰¹ Milliken, 225.

³⁰² Larsen, 23-24.

³⁰³ Milliken, 225.

³⁰⁴ Larsen, 13-14.

³⁰⁵ Jacobs, 45.

³⁰⁶ Bennett and Checkel, 32.

³⁰⁷ Beach and Pedersen, Location 2642 (electronic version).

³⁰⁸ Larsen, 10.

because of its inherently collective nature, and public-facing quality.³⁰⁹ Thus, although discourse can present challenges to researchers, these issues do not appear to manifest themselves as prominently in this case.

Establishing this is of profound significance for two reasons. Firstly, presupposing there is an intrinsic social nature to political discourse being utilised, this bestows much credibility upon discourse as evidence, in that a public-facing discourse is presumed to be more emblematic of wider, societal or collective understandings, rather than a mere reflection of individual beliefs, and bias.³¹⁰ But secondly, provided this can be accomplished, a central advantage of utilizing discourse as evidence, is that “foreign policy representations by governments [...] not only define [a] [...] space for International Relations, but also [ultimately] create subject positions of identities [...] to identify with and to ‘speak from’.”³¹¹ In doing so, discourse critically aspires to evidence *identity* as a causal factor underlying policy decisions,³¹² and given discourse facilitates “analysis of ‘interest formation’”,³¹³ leveraging discourse as a form of evidence effectively seeks to prove interest, in relation to identity. Bearing in mind chapter one demonstrated that a constructivist-inspired, civilian power role concept assumes interest is a function of identity,³¹⁴ once the expectations and diagnostic criteria of Germany adhering to a civilian power role concept are stated in this chapter, discourse can then be utilised to help determine whether statements, and corresponding actions within the relationship, evidence Germany’s civilian power identity, as the basis of interest, and ultimate explanation of, its relations.

Critically, and as this chapter will ultimately expand upon, the intersection between a socially influenced formation of identity, and interest, is a central argument, that mirrors many of the assumptions at the core of a constructivist, and relatedly, civilian power theoretical framework. In doing so, it is key to recognise that utilizing discourse as a form of evidence is not only effective for process-tracing, it is a form of evidence fundamentally valued for its

³⁰⁹ Banchoff, "German Identity and European Integration," 269-72.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 269.

³¹¹ Milliken, 239.

³¹² Banchoff, "German Identity and European Integration," 269.

³¹³ Larsen, 22.

³¹⁴ Refer to chapter one.

shared assumptions with constructivism.³¹⁵ Based upon these considerations, it appears the research questions in this case are bolstered, empirically speaking, by use of discourse, in that it seeks to address causality, based upon assumptions which match a constructivist theoretical framework. Having said this, however, it is similarly critical to appreciate that discourse is but one facet of a much larger body of empirical evidence, which includes secondary sources of material as well. Consequently, having noted the particular value of discourse, it now becomes necessary to return to consideration of the case-explaining methodology in practice, so as to understand how leveraging such evidence in the fifth, and final step of the process-tracing methodology, can allow one to determine a sufficient answer.

2.2.4 Determining Sufficiency for an Answer

What should be reasonably clear from the substantive consideration of evidence, and its application in a Bayesian logic, is that far more important than the amount of evidence itself, is the capacity for evidence being utilised to meaningfully address the hypothesis of interest, against competing alternatives.³¹⁶ The importance is quality, and appropriateness of evidence, rather than quantity. Based upon this, a question becomes apparent: at what point is the evidence being used in this methodology sufficient for determining causality, and accordingly, answering the research questions? As a result, the fifth, and final step of the case-explaining process, as envisaged by this thesis, requires a clearly defined point at which such a determination can be made.

Indeed, pursuant to the Bayesian logic, there is a systematic upgrading and downgrading of confidence throughout an investigation, by weighing evidence against expectations. But as a definitive, end goal, process-tracing aspires to establish what is considered “a minimally sufficient explanation”, whereby, “all [...] relevant facets of the outcome have been accounted for while ensuring that the evidence” most strongly points to a particular explanation, rather than “plausible alternatives”.³¹⁷ Hence, regarding the question of when there is enough evidence to reach a conclusion, for social theories in particular, this requires that “no

³¹⁵ Hellmann, "Goodbye Bismarck? The Foreign Policy of Contemporary Germany," 30.; Milliken, 225.

³¹⁶ Bennett, 3.

³¹⁷ Beach and Pedersen, Location 437 (electronic version).

important aspects of the outcome” are unaccounted for.³¹⁸ There can be no loose ends of consideration. As a consequence, this thesis is structured, so as to ensure chapters three through six, each address a distinct facet of the civilian power role concept. As will be shown in this chapter, these facets not only constitute the specific manifestation of a constructivist-variant theoretical framework, but also, represent the diagnostic criteria underpinning the study. In approaching it as such, this thesis will systematically consider each distinct facet of the civilian power role concept, in the context of Germany’s relationship with Iran, to ensure a particular explanation occurs, without neglecting consideration of all facets. This also means imperative consideration of counterfactual explanations will similarly occur throughout the study, at which point, events that might serve to challenge a civilian power explanation are given due examination. Based upon this approach, sufficiency through a process-tracing methodology is attainable, by analysing whether the hypothesised causality is deemed to account for the outcome, beyond the scope of alternative explanation.³¹⁹ For example, in this particular case, sufficiency of explanation could be established if it was determined Germany’s identity as a civilian power, was the ultimate *arbiter*, or influencer, of German interest and policy towards Iran, beyond the scope of alternative explanations.

But how can this be accomplished, given that upgrading confidence in one theory based upon diagnostic criteria, is not in and of itself, elimination alternative explanations? What if certain aspects of diagnostic criteria are disconfirmed, but others confirmed? This could present a challenge. To address this dilemma, it is helpful to conceptualise several distinct sets of tests utilised within this fifth step, that allow one to determine sufficiency of an explanation, while systematically eliminating alternative explanations, based upon evidence. Of particular relevance to this thesis, are *hoop tests* and *doubly decisive* tests.³²⁰ As implied by its name, a hoop test effectively operates as a hoop, through which an explanation must pass in order for it to be valid, and failure to do so disqualifies it.³²¹ In this sense, such a test is particularly effective in that it eliminates alternative explanations that are clearly incapable of explaining the case,

³¹⁸ Ibid., Location 1766-76 (electronic version).; Frank Schimmelfennig, "The Community Trap: Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action, and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union," *International organization* 55, no. 1 (2001).

³¹⁹ Bennett and Checkel, 12.

³²⁰ Van Evera, 31-32.

³²¹ Ibid., 31.; Bennett and Checkel, 16-17.

by establishing progressively smaller hoops through which a potential explanation must pass.³²² That is to say, if evidence were to suggest trade and commercial relations account for German interest, creating further hoops through which this explanation, and this explanation alone must pass through in order to be confirmed, not only eliminates alternatives which fail to pass the test of evidence, but does, in a sense, increase confidence in its validity if true, given the hypothesised explanation is further scrutinised. Yet, critically, in this conceptualisation, is implicit recognition that although passing through a single hoop, or even several, certainly eliminates alternatives failing to pass, and may indirectly upgrade confidence in its validity, passing through a hoop nevertheless does not, in and of itself, establish sufficient confidence in an explanation.³²³ For this reason, it is necessary to leverage a doubly decisive test, which utilises facts that are not only unique to one explanation, but also very certain.³²⁴ This not only eliminates alternative explanations, but clearly demonstrates which explanation is true.

With these in mind, in order to make a determination, this thesis will consider which explanation accounts for the outcome of interest, based upon an ability to systematically eliminate alternative theories, which fail to account for known facts of the relationship, or contradict fundamental premises and expectations. Although it will not actually implement a literal test, it will utilise the conceptual basis of these tests to consider whether evidence supports a civilian power explanation, or an alternative. Further, even though it remains an accepted fact that unassailable evidence of causality is never truly attainable in this non-positivist methodology,³²⁵ successfully eliminating “all plausible alternatives” means the remaining one should be true,³²⁶ and helpful to this approach, are clear diagnostic criteria of the hypothesised explanation itself. After all, ultimately, a hypothesised explanation must be evidenced to operate in the expected sense if true for a particular case.³²⁷ Consequently, now that the methodology’s five steps are noted, it now becomes necessary to establish the clear expectations and diagnostic criteria of the hypothesised explanation –a constructivist-variant,

³²² Beach and Pedersen, Location 1945-56 (electronic version).; Bennett, 4.

³²³ 4.; Van Evera, 31.; Bennett and Checkel, 16-17.

³²⁴ Bennett, 4.; Van Evera, 32.; Bennett and Checkel, 17-18.

³²⁵ Beach and Pedersen, Location 437 (electronic version).

³²⁶ Collier, 827.

³²⁷ Bennett and Checkel, 30.

civilian power role concept. In doing so, it will then be possible to implement a study of the relationship itself, by updating confidence in clearly identifiable expectations and criteria, should the explanation be true.

2.3 A Constructivist-Inspired Theoretical Framework

As noted previously, this thesis necessitates acceptance of a constructivist-inspired theoretical framework, in order to determine whether the hypothesised explanation –the prevailing civilian power understanding of post-unification Germany– can, in fact, account for the outcome of Germany’s relationship with Iran. Accordingly, this section will further expand upon chapter one’s consideration of core beliefs and assumptions underlying constructivist accounts of foreign policy, which as noted previously, ostensibly underpin Germany’s civilian power role, and supposedly account for its foreign policy outcomes. It should also be cautioned, however, this section does not intend to provide a comprehensive discussion of constructivism, but instead, to present the core premises which are relevant to the civilian power variant of constructivism utilised in this thesis –much as they are for other strands of constructivism. Once this is accomplished, it will then be possible to better consider how these more general assumptions of constructivism are understood to apply towards the specific case of a civilian power Germany, including, what should be expected, provided such an account of its policy proves accurate.

With this in mind, a schism between rationalist accounts of foreign policy and ones that emphasise non-material, and identity-based factors, is not merely a case of differing assumptions, it is one of epistemological and ontological difference, in which rationalism’s positivist approach to explanation, means considering causes of state action based on norms, ideas, and identity, are not possible.³²⁸ In order to account for German interest and behaviour beyond the scope of rationalist thought, and in accordance with civilian power assumptions, this necessitates both an analytical perspective transcending these key rationalist limitations, as well as one predicated upon the intersection of “state identity, [...] interests and [...]

³²⁸ Friedrich Kratochwil and John Gerard Ruggie, "International Organization: A State of the Art on an Art of the State," *International Organization* 40, no. 4 (2009): 767.; Banchoff, "German Identity and European Integration," 262.

action”.³²⁹ Helpfully, as evidenced in chapter one, the answer to these parameters is apparent in *constructivism*, as an analytical perspective, and theoretical framework for this thesis.

Not only is constructivism considered a fundamental challenge to rationalist accounts from an ontological perspective,³³⁰ but above all, from an explanatory one, in its rejection that traditional explanations of materialism, power, and its related basis of interest,³³¹ capture the impetus of state action. Although constructivism is a diverse field, in which nuanced interpretations³³² have accordingly prevented consensus, and even produced disagreements over definition,³³³ there are nevertheless shared, core beliefs, underpinning constructivism, that remain central to all its forms, in which rationalist and materialist accounts are understood to be lacking.

Namely, in this regard, are fundamental beliefs that a material world is shaped by, as well as profoundly contingent upon, the *ideational*,³³⁴ and these ideational processes reflect “normative [...] dimensions [and] express not only individual but also collective intentionality”.³³⁵ This means foreign policy is a “mutually constitutive” process,³³⁶ in which an interplay of both substantially domestic,³³⁷ as well as international normative influences,³³⁸ ultimately determine “what is called for on the basis of ‘norms and rules emerging in historical and cultural circumstances’”.³³⁹ For constructivist explanations, *collective* sentiments,³⁴⁰ and “collective understandings” derived from experiences, shape foreign policy calculation, in accordance with socially-developed “normative frames of reference”.³⁴¹ As a consequence, a state’s

³²⁹ "German Identity and European Integration," 260-61.

³³⁰ Emanuel Adler, "Seizing the Middle Ground," *ibid.* 3 (1997): 323.; Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 35.; Ruggie. 34.

³³¹ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 1.; Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 689.

³³² Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 1.; Bennett and Checkel, 14.; Ruggie. 34.

³³³ Adler, 320-35.

³³⁴ Ruggie. 32.; Wendt, "Constructing International Politics," 71-74.; *Social Theory of International Politics*, 1-24.

³³⁵ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 691.; Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 1.; Adler, 322.

³³⁶ Ruggie. 24.

³³⁷ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 21.

³³⁸ Struwe, 8.

³³⁹ Adler, 329.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 326-27.; Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (2009): 397.

³⁴¹ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 692.; Ronald Jepperson, Alexander Wendt, and Peter J Katzenstein, "Norms, Identity, and Culture in National Security," in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, ed. Peter J Katzenstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 54.

subjective conceptualisation of the world is best viewed as occurring through a *social* process,³⁴² entailing *intersubjective*³⁴³ understandings. In this regard, constructivist thought reflects a Weberian philosophic notion of *verstehen*, or, understanding,³⁴⁴ in which a subjective understanding is considered paramount to overall explanation of behaviour. Specifically, in regard to constructivism, however, this philosophic dynamic occurs, as a socially-forged understanding manifests itself in a normative orientation, which in turn, shapes behaviour.³⁴⁵ In this manner, for a constructivist account of foreign policy, “shared understandings, expectations, or knowledge”,³⁴⁶ resultantly shape the course of policy, and determine acceptable action,³⁴⁷ through a “logic of appropriateness”.³⁴⁸

The implication of this is profound, in that constructivist accounts therefore attribute foreign policy action to a subjective conceptualisation “of the meanings that [...] [somethings] have for them”,³⁴⁹ and such meanings “do not merely constrain or empower actors [...] [they] also define their [...] reality.”³⁵⁰ As a consequence, “far from being exogenously given [as rationalist accounts would posit], the intersubjective knowledge [...] [serves to] *constitute* [...] identities and interests”³⁵¹ themselves,³⁵² as subjective, “role specific understandings and expectations”, rooted in collective understandings of the past and present,³⁵³ ultimately converge to “determine the identity of a state”.³⁵⁴ This subjective “state identity [...] [in turn, becomes] constructivism’s core explanatory concept”³⁵⁵ regarding the cause of foreign policy action,³⁵⁶ in that for matters of interest and causality within constructivism, “collective understandings [alone] are not sufficient cause for action”, rather, policy outcomes are a

³⁴² Adler, 319.; Ruggie. 33.; Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 20.; “Constructing International Politics,” 71-72.

³⁴³ Adler, 322-26.; Thomas Banchoff, “German Identity and European Integration,” *ibid.* 5 (1999): 269.; Wendt, “Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics,” 394.; Ruggie. 12.

³⁴⁴ Sung Ho Kim, “Max Weber,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Palo Alto, California 2017).; Ruggie. 30.

³⁴⁵ Adler, 326-27.

³⁴⁶ Wendt, “Constructing International Politics,” 73.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*; Adler, 325.

³⁴⁸ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 692.

³⁴⁹ Wendt, “Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics,” 396-97.

³⁵⁰ Adler, 327.

³⁵¹ Wendt, “Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics,” 410.

³⁵² Jepperson, Wendt, and Katzenstein, 54.

³⁵³ Wendt, “Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics,” 397.

³⁵⁴ Struwe, 8.; Adler, 330.; Ruggie. 3.; Jepperson, Wendt, and Katzenstein, 54.

³⁵⁵ Banchoff, “German Identity and European Integration,” 271.; Ruggie. 3.

³⁵⁶ Jepperson, Wendt, and Katzenstein, 52-60.

reflection of *identity*.³⁵⁷ Thus, imperatively, it is this socially and normatively forged identity itself which “shape[s] actors’ [...] interests”, as well as behaviour.³⁵⁸ Consequently, and of utmost significance, for constructivist accounts of foreign policy, the underlying causality of state action is identity,³⁵⁹ in that interest of states is considered a function of, or, reflection of, state identity itself.³⁶⁰ In turn, based upon this, the underlying *explanation* of foreign policy in a given case, is itself a reflection of identity, rather than inherently rationalist, or materialist calculation.

The implication of this perspective is significant for purposes of this thesis, in that explanation of causality, the relationship, and ultimately, the primary research question, all accordingly necessitate a preeminent focus upon the ostensible civilian power identity underpinning post-unification German foreign policy and interest. With this in mind, for purposes of this thesis, and determining whether the hypothesised variant of constructivism can account for Germany’s relationship with Iran, constructivist accounts require a first essential step involve clear “specification of state identity”.³⁶¹ There is a fundamental “implication –state behavior should not contradict state identity”,³⁶² which means by establishing a clear definition of state identity, it is then possible to determine whether the outcome of a given case of foreign policy conforms with the “behavioral aspect”³⁶³ necessary for validating a constructivist account. Confirming a constructivist explanation of foreign policy necessitates evidencing identity’s impact on policy, by addressing “whether and how [...] identity constrains foreign policy behavior [...] [and] interests”.³⁶⁴ This naturally requires showing both the “content of state identity [...] [and] demonstrat[ing] its effects”.³⁶⁵

³⁵⁷ Adler, 339.

³⁵⁸ Wendt, "Constructing International Politics," 71-72.; Banchoff, "German Identity and European Integration," 262.; Jepperson, Wendt, and Katzenstein, 53.

³⁵⁹ Adler, 329.; Struwe, 8.; Banchoff, "German Identity and European Integration," 262.

³⁶⁰ Alcaro, *Europe and Iran's Nuclear Crisis: Lead Groups and Eu Foreign Policy-Making*, Location 1231 (electronic version).; Adler, 341.; Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," 398.; *Social Theory of International Politics*, 41.; Jepperson, Wendt, and Katzenstein, 52-60.

³⁶¹ Banchoff, "German Identity and European Integration," 268.

³⁶² Ibid., 278.

³⁶³ Ibid., 276.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.; Bennett and Checkel, 34.

³⁶⁵ Banchoff, "German Identity and European Integration," 262.

With this in mind, it is clear confirming such an explanation of foreign policy not only necessitates clear articulation of the particular constructivist-variant under consideration in this case –as chapter one did– but a tracing of the underlying normative elements, and above all, a demonstration of how the identity, ostensibly underpinning post-unification Germany, is expected to function. Here, it is possible to recognise the particular value –in accordance with a process-tracing methodology– of establishing diagnostic criteria for the constructivist-inspired, civilian power role concept, in that doing so, will allow for critical analysis of the relationship based upon expectations, and accordingly upgrade confidence in the findings of this thesis. With these considerations in mind, it is now essential to turn consideration back towards the case of post-unification Germany itself, in order to better define the civilian power identity, and related assumptions underlying it, as well as, ultimately, establish diagnostic criteria based upon these.

2.4 Historical and Collective Memories Intersect to Forge German Identity

As noted in chapter one, a fundamental aspect of post-war German foreign policy is considered attributable to the influence of normative perspectives.³⁶⁶ In this sense, accounts such as these would suggest contemporary Germany is a state in which, per a constructivist explanation, norms tangibly and meaningfully shape policy. But how exactly did such tendencies emerge? And what accounts for the normative understandings that supposedly shape the course of contemporary German foreign policy?

Initially, Germany's post-war normative orientation in foreign policy can be attributed to exogenous factors, particularly the "post war expectations" of others within the international environment, that Germany never return to the atrocities of National Socialism, or power politics.³⁶⁷ In this regard, it was the influence of expectations which initially engendered Germany's contemplation of a *historical memory* concerning the past, and in doing so, this form of memory emerged as a more significant "organizing principle in the making of [Germany's]

³⁶⁶ Sebastian Harnisch, "'The Politics of Domestication': A New Paradigm in German Foreign Policy: German Politics Lecture, International Association for the Study of German Politics (Iasgp), Birmingham 27 May 2009," *German politics* 18, no. 4 (2009): 456.

³⁶⁷ Maull, 94.

foreign policy”, than for any other country.³⁶⁸ This normative influence of a historical memory, or, “an externalised and objectified process” regarding shared understanding of the past,³⁶⁹ became inextricably linked with the overall basis of foreign policy and identity in Germany, in stark contrast with a pre-war foreign policy largely consistent with rationalist tendencies.³⁷⁰ In doing so, this dispositional shift, based upon understandings of the past, forged contemporary German foreign policy, identity and interest, into an apotheosis of historical memory in action.

Yet, for all its significance, it is imperative to recognise that for post-war German foreign policy, identity, and interest, the externally shaped, and objective nature of historical memory, is complimented with a more subjective, and particularised, *collective memory*, that gives salience, as well as meaning, to present conceptualisation of the past.³⁷¹ This means, that although external normative expectations indeed matter, there is another, equally important, internal, or domestic, normative understanding, shaping post-war German foreign policy, and identity. As a consequence, historical memory, and collective memory are both central components of a wider normative process, in which domestic, as well as international understandings, concurrently shape foreign policy, as historical memory intersects with a subjective, shared understanding of the past within the present.³⁷² Ultimately, through this intersection, collective memory functions to allow normative understandings of the past to serve as the preeminent influencer of contemporary German foreign policy.³⁷³ In doing so, Germany’s post-war foreign policy is considered a principle example of how collective and normative understandings can define foreign policy and interest, given these understandings are not only said to account for post-war Germany’s decision to eschew traditional, rationalist aims of power, interest, and assertiveness,³⁷⁴ but specifically, serve to forge its *identity*.³⁷⁵ Thus,

³⁶⁸ Paterson, "Beyond Semi-Sovereignty: The New Germany in the New Europe," 181.; Markovits and Reich, 11.
³⁶⁹ , 14.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 11.; Banchoff, "Historical Memory and German Foreign Policy: The Cases of Adenauer and Brandt," 36.; "German Policy Towards the European Union: The Effects of Historical Memory," 60.

³⁷¹ Seminal work on collective memory by Maurice Halbwachs. Halbwachs.; Markovits and Reich, 14.; Wittlinger and Larose, 482.

³⁷² Markovits and Reich, 14-15.; Welch and Wittlinger, 44.; Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 644.

³⁷³ Wittlinger and Larose, 481-82.; Welch and Wittlinger, 44-45.; Markovits and Reich, xiii-13.

³⁷⁴ Bulmer and Paterson, 1391.; Bulmer, Maurer, and Paterson, 177-78.; Jennifer A Yoder, "Dialogues, Trialogues and Triangles: The Geometry of Germany's Foreign Policy of Trust-Building," *ibid.* 26, no. 2 (2017): 195.; Markovits and Reich, xii-2.; Welch and Wittlinger, 44.

³⁷⁵ Bulmer and Paterson, "Germany in the European Union: Gentle Giant or Emergent Leader?," 11-12.; Anderson and Goodman, 23-62.

beginning with the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), historical and collective memories were understood to constitute the basis of its “national identity”,³⁷⁶ as a *civilian power*,³⁷⁷ and this identity, was further accepted to explain post-war German foreign policy and interest,³⁷⁸ as per constructivist accounts.³⁷⁹

This point is of profound significance, in that notwithstanding widespread expectations that such an identity, and foreign policy would fundamentally change with unification of a previously divided Germany,³⁸⁰ the appearance of *continuity* in post-unification German foreign policy, identity, and interest,³⁸¹ served to empirically³⁸² bolster constructivist explanations.³⁸³ Hence, as noted previously, at the core of perceived continuity in post-unification German foreign policy, identity, and interest, is a strong validation of constructivist explanations, in which a surprising desire to reject traditional notions of power and interest, not only fundamentally challenge rationalist explanations,³⁸⁴ but in doing so, accentuate Germany’s adherence to a civilian power interpretation.³⁸⁵ Put succinctly, the “consensus [...] [is] Germany has remained a civilian power”,³⁸⁶ and this consensus predicates itself upon the belief that continuity is, in and of itself, embodied by Germany’s adherence to the *civilian power role concept*.³⁸⁷ But what exactly defines such a civilian power role concept?

³⁷⁶ Welch and Wittlinger, 39.

³⁷⁷ Markovits and Reich, 49.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 206.

³⁷⁹ Maull, 44.; Banchoff, "German Identity and European Integration," 259-89.; Maull, "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power?'," 13-14.

³⁸⁰ William E Paterson, "Does Germany Still Have a European Vocation?," *ibid.* 19, no. 1 (2010): 44.; Maull, *Germany's Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, 2-3.

³⁸¹ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 696.; Markovits and Reich, 24.; Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," 34-53.; Banchoff, "German Identity and European Integration," 259.; Harnisch and Maull, 2.; Paterson, "Beyond Semi-Sovereignty: The New Germany in the New Europe," 182.; Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power?'," 56-80.

³⁸² Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," 35-50.; Anderson and Goodman, 23-62.

³⁸³ Harnisch and Maull, 3.; Maull, *Germany's Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, 3-4.; Banchoff, "German Identity and European Integration," 259-89.; Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," 37.

³⁸⁴ Banchoff, "German Identity and European Integration," 259-89.; Markovits and Reich, 8.; Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," 38.; Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power?'," 56.

³⁸⁵ "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power?'," 13-14.

³⁸⁶ *Germany's Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, 3.; Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 695.

³⁸⁷ Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," 35-60.; Harnisch and Maull, 130.; Maull, *Germany's Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, 1.; Bulmer and Paterson, "Germany in

And to what extent does the term *role concept* itself have significance and meaning for this study?

2.4.1 A Role Concept

At its simplest level, a civilian power adheres to a “foreign policy role concept [...] [or] a complex bundle of norms, beliefs, attitudes and perceptions”, which ultimately dictate behaviour,³⁸⁸ beyond the scope of material interest.³⁸⁹ Accordingly, in order to fully understand this dynamic, and before elaborating upon the specific facets of a civilian power Germany, it is beneficial to recognise envisaging a state within a role concept, actually benefits the very aims of this thesis. This occurs because a role theory is, in fact, “a framework for describing national role performance and role conceptions and for exploring the sources of those [...] conceptions.”³⁹⁰ In other words, role theory is effectively a clear statement of how the normative understandings for a state such as Germany, should result in specific, expected behaviour, against which actual behaviour can be assessed. Although role theory is largely featured within rationalist, and materialist foreign policy accounts³⁹¹ –which therefore may suggest a non-constructivist epistemology and ontology– this in fact appears more a coincidence of appropriation, given role theory features “a natural affinity with [constructivist] [...] theory”.³⁹² Intriguingly, seminal work in the area of role theory by Kalevi Holsti demonstrates a strong parallel with core constructivist assumptions of the intersubjective, normative, and related conceptualisation of self.³⁹³ In doing so, these seminal considerations bespeak an acceptance amongst scholars that role is increasingly pertinent in constructivist accounts, and critically, inherently related to the process of “identity formation”, and its shaping of foreign policy.³⁹⁴

the European Union: Gentle Giant or Emergent Leader?," 9-32.; Paterson, "Beyond Semi-Sovereignty: The New Germany in the New Europe," 181.

³⁸⁸ Hanns Maull, "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power?'," *ibid.* 9 (2000): 14.

³⁸⁹ Sebastian Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," *ibid.* 10, no. 1 (2001): 37.

³⁹⁰ Kalevi J Holsti, "National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (1970): 246-47.

³⁹¹ Cameron G Thies and Marijke Breuning, "Integrating Foreign Policy Analysis and International Relations through Role Theory," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 8, no. 1 (2012): 1.; Sebastian Harnisch, Cornelia Frank, and Hanns Maull, eds., *Role Theory in International Relations* (Taylor & Francis, 2011), 18.

³⁹² Thies and Breuning, 1-2.

³⁹³ Holsti, 233-37.

³⁹⁴ Harnisch, Frank, and Maull, 7-12.; Thies and Breuning, 2-3.

In this regard, it would appear there is significant value in a role concept's clear statement of a *national role conception*, in which definitive, diagnostic like, expressions of acceptable actions for states, reflect a specific identity.³⁹⁵ Thus, roles manifest themselves as a diagnostic criterion, or “ ‘mental maps’ which guide [...] decisions on appropriate policies”³⁹⁶, and reflect “notions of actors about who they are”, as well as “how they therefore should” act,³⁹⁷ within a finite scope of allowed behaviour for a role.³⁹⁸ Based upon this, national roles further constitute very tangible expectations concerning assumed “causal variables [...] in explaining the foreign policies of [...] nations”, which in turn, may explain action.³⁹⁹ What this means is: in parallel to the secondary research question of this thesis, and consistent with the methodology being utilised, role theory aspires to explain foreign policy through analysis of causation, and does so by “provid[ing] the link between identity and behavior”.⁴⁰⁰ It does this by taking clear *role expectations* of a state adhering to a given role concept,⁴⁰¹ and by considering actual *role enactment*, and *role performance*,⁴⁰² or, the actual behaviour of the state itself in a given foreign policy case,⁴⁰³ it may establish causality of policy to the identity within national role conceptualisation. The implication is: simply because a state envisages a role concept, does not mean a state's policy axiomatically reflects the values and norms one identifies with, and expectations are analytically separate from outcomes.⁴⁰⁴ Hence, establishing a clear correlation between policy expectations, and policy outcomes is central to determining causality, and explanation.

With this in mind, based upon role theory, provided one can establish clear expectations to compare events against, a role concept represents a straightforward path to determining whether causality of state action is indeed attributable to assumed role. Helpfully, it is noted in the specific case of post-unification Germany, that constructivist assumptions said to be

³⁹⁵ Holsti, 246.

³⁹⁶ Maull, "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power?'," 14.

³⁹⁷ Harnisch, Frank, and Maull, 1.

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 23.; Holsti, 239.

³⁹⁹ 234-35.

⁴⁰⁰ Harnisch, Frank, and Maull, 16.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., 8.

⁴⁰² Ibid.

⁴⁰³ Holsti, 245-46.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 238.

underlying the civilian power role concept,⁴⁰⁵ as well as salient normative understandings, establish almost “prescriptive expectations and criteria” for Germany’s civilian power role concept.⁴⁰⁶ This means the case of post-unification Germany, and its civilian power role concept, presents a coherent means of determining causality, and relatedly explanation. In order to do so, however, this requires the specific diagnostic criteria, and expectations of a civilian power Germany, be established.

2.5 The Four Facets of a Civilian Power Germany

As the result of a myriad of events, and influences from the past, the civilian power role concept naturally exhibits numerous facets. This, in turn, requires elaboration, and consideration, in order to demonstrate how diagnostic criteria are derived from a role concept reflecting a wide range of normative understandings and interests. Accordingly, this section is not to be considered an in-depth explication of each facet of the civilian power role concept – the minutiae of these facets will be elaborated upon in respective chapters– rather, it aspires to clearly articulate how this thesis conceptualises the various facets of the civilian power role concept. It will then capture the essence of each key facet being utilised, as well as the basic expectations of Germany’s enactment of a civilian power role concept pursuant to these. In doing so, this section will ultimately identify four distinct facets of the civilian power role concept, from which a list of diagnostic criteria can be established.

2.5.1 Multilateralism and Cooperation

The first of Germany’s four civilian power facets is best captured by a “*‘Never alone’: integration, [and] multilateralism*”,⁴⁰⁷ commitment. For post-unification Germany, a core acknowledgement that cooperation is necessary for “the pursuit of international objectives”, results in a German foreign policy “beyond the [conceptual] world of the nation-state”, and one reflecting a commitment to the development of supranational structures, or, multilateral

⁴⁰⁵ Thies and Breuning, 2-3.; Maull.; Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy."

⁴⁰⁶ Banchoff, "Historical Memory and German Foreign Policy: The Cases of Adenauer and Brandt," 38.

⁴⁰⁷ Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 67.

institutions, within which to pursue policy.⁴⁰⁸ In this respect, *integration, and interdependence are central to a civilian power Germany*.⁴⁰⁹ Importantly, however, the civilian power form of these concepts, exists in fundamental contrast with rationalist notions of interdependence,⁴¹⁰ because the desire to cultivate an international cooperative structure, with high levels of interdependence,⁴¹¹ is predicated upon profoundly “normative [...] concerns”, in which unilateral policy efforts are largely beyond moral justification.⁴¹² Hence, *a committed civilian power rejects the pursuit of unilateral policies*,⁴¹³ when these can be achieved through “effective and socially just” multilateral means,⁴¹⁴ because this is considered more acceptable from a normative perspective. As a consequence, there is a core belief for an “ideal-type civilian power role concept”, that unilateral means are no longer effective at achieving policy goals, and the rejection “of achieving ‘power and plenty’ through unilateral means”, is as much about legitimacy, as it is about efficacy.⁴¹⁵ Either way, core to the civilian power role concept is an understanding that multilateralism is fundamental, and therefore constitutes a necessary “criteria for a civilian power”⁴¹⁶.

2.5.2 Human Rights, Rule of Law, and Democratisation through Foreign Policy

The second facet of a civilian power Germany, is “*‘Never Again’: [...] moralism and democracy*”⁴¹⁷, whereby, as part of this role concept, these norms are assumed to “define interests [...] identity and foreign-policy objectives” for Germany.⁴¹⁸ Specifically, these interests are said to

⁴⁰⁸ Maull, 92-93.; Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 56.; Henning Tewes, "How Civilian? How Much Power? Germany and the Eastern Enlargement of Nato," in *Germany as a Civilian Power?: The Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, ed. Sebastian Harnisch and Hanns Maull (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 10-11.; Maull, "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 15.

⁴⁰⁹ Maull, 97.

⁴¹⁰ For example: Keohane and Nye.

⁴¹¹ Maull, 101.

⁴¹² Hellmann, "Goodbye Bismarck? The Foreign Policy of Contemporary Germany," 9.

⁴¹³ Oliver Meier, "A Civilian Power Caught between the Lines: Germany and Nuclear Non-Proliferation," in *Germany as a Civilian Power?: The Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, ed. Sebastian Harnisch and Hanns Maull (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 70.; Hanns Maull in Harnisch and Maull, 125.

⁴¹⁴ Maull, 102.

⁴¹⁵ Harnisch and Maull, 3-4.; Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," 37.

⁴¹⁶ Harald Mueller in Maull, *Germany's Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, 63.; "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 16.

⁴¹⁷ "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 66.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., 68.

be captured in “powerful core political values”, including a fundamental belief in the importance of advancing “universal democratic values in foreign policy”, a commitment to ensuring respect of human rights,⁴¹⁹ and strengthening rule of law.⁴²⁰

It is said one of the “two most important parts of a civilian power” is represented by its unwavering commitment to democratic principles.⁴²¹ Importantly, as a result, this core value is assumed to extend beyond the scope of domestic policy interest, because a true civilian power promotes democratic values through foreign policy, “even if this would lead to a deterioration in bilateral relations.”⁴²² Hence, it is expected that a civilian power demonstrates a clear foreign policy goal of promoting democratic values in bilateral relations, with countries exhibiting a democratic deficit.⁴²³ Relatedly, by advancing these democratic values, this facet entails a parallel, core, foreign policy ambition of civilian powers, to encourage strengthening the rule of law,⁴²⁴ both to facilitate desired democratisation, but also, as part of another key concern for human rights, social justice, and humanitarian interests. For a civilian power, human rights are “the highest global values”, and therefore need “to be one of the most important aims” of a civilian power’s foreign policy agenda.⁴²⁵ As part of this, a civilian power is expected to encourage “social equity and sustainable development”,⁴²⁶ or, “social justice”,⁴²⁷ to the extent that ideally, a civilian power’s foreign policy reflects interests based upon “humanitarian arguments, rather than on calculations of power and interest.”⁴²⁸

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., 56-66.

⁴²⁰ Harnisch and Maull, 4.

⁴²¹ Tewes, 11.

⁴²² Maull, "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power?'," 17.

⁴²³ Sebastian Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," *ibid.* 10, no. 1 (2001): 37.; Harnisch and Maull, 125.; Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power?'," 66.

⁴²⁴ Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," 37.; Hanns Maull, "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power?'," *ibid.* 9, no. 2 (2000): 15.; Harald Mueller in *Germany's Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, 63.;

⁴²⁵ Florian Pfeil, "Civilian Power and Human Rights: The Case of Germany," in *Germany as a Civilian Power?: The Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, ed. Sebastian Harnisch and Hanns Maull (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 88.

⁴²⁶ Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," 37.; Harnisch and Maull, 4.

⁴²⁷ Maull, "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power?'," 15.

⁴²⁸ "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power?'," 65-72.

Consequently, although the constructivist-variant, civilian power role concept is inherently normative, and underscores a “value-based” foreign policy⁴²⁹ across its facets, this one in particular encapsulates many of the specific normative beliefs, as well as values underlying a civilian power foreign policy. In doing so, these values are understood to bespeak a fundamental belief of a civilian power, that through advancement of these norms and values, “it may be possible to ‘civilize’ [...] [and] transform, international relations”.⁴³⁰ The implication is: an ideal civilian power “must [...] actively pursue [these] goals and attempt to implement their agenda”,⁴³¹ rather than acting passively. Accordingly, this core premise is of profound implication for a civilian power, in that it supposedly engenders an almost “missionary element” in its foreign policy,⁴³² as the very definition of an ideal civilian power is one demonstrating a clear willingness to encourage these values, by seizing every opportunity to do so,⁴³³ even if this requires the civilian power to “forego [...] [other] national interests”.⁴³⁴ Taking these interests, and premises into account, there is accordingly an assumption that true adherence to the civilian power role concept necessitates states avoid “coddling up to dictators”⁴³⁵ in their relationships, as this would appear antithetical to the active promotion of core values.

Based upon these parameters, it is clear that an ideal civilian power would place preeminent interest in the advancement of democracy, human rights, and rule of law, through active foreign policy measures, even if this comes at the expense of wider interests. Relatedly, it would be anticipated that a civilian power would therefore demonstrate this commitment, by ensuring the normative basis of interest comes before other, rationalist, or material interests.

2.5.3 Norms and Values Supersede Material Interest

⁴²⁹ Pfeil, 88.

⁴³⁰ Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," 44.; Hanns Maull, "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power?'," *ibid.* 9, no. 2 (2000): 14.

⁴³¹ Meier, 70.

⁴³² Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power?'," 68.

⁴³³ "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power?'," 14.; Harnisch and Maull, 4.; Pfeil, 88.; Harnisch and Maull, 124.

⁴³⁴, 4.

⁴³⁵ Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power?'," 66.

As an extension of the core constructivist belief that rationalist, and materialist interests are at most, secondary, ideally, a civilian power's economic features of foreign policy are understood to "reflec[t] values and forms of social organisation", as opposed to a strictly rationalist economic valuation,⁴³⁶ in which state "behavior represents the purposive pursuit of prosperity".⁴³⁷ Although traditional material interests are allowed for, it is accepted that to a civilian power, these remain predicated, and contingent upon, "distinct [...] norms and values embodied in the [...] role."⁴³⁸ Consequently, the normative and value-based definition underlying civilian power foreign policy interest, dictates both "pursu[ing] [...] norms even if [...] no significant [...] material interests" exist, as well as prioritizing the normative, if material interests are apparent, and would be compromised by doing so.⁴³⁹ In this manner, the initial momentum of foreign policy is presumed to be normative in basis, and a supremacy of normative, over material, is maintained throughout a relationship, because material interest, albeit allowed, remains contingent upon, or curbed by, the former. The implication is: economic features of a relationship, beyond a normative and identity-based explanation, are understood to present a challenge to the manner in which a civilian power ostensibly defines interest in foreign policy.⁴⁴⁰ Furthermore, this is considered a particular challenge, should the economic relations occur with a partner not conforming to a civilian power's normative expectations on issues such as human rights.⁴⁴¹

2.5.4 Political Solutions are Optimal, Use of Force is Detested

Rooted in historical and collective memories concerning Germany's past legacy of militarism,⁴⁴² post-war Germany has cultivated an "anti-militarist political culture [...] known as the 'culture of restraint'".⁴⁴³ Considered one of the "two most important" components of a

⁴³⁶ Maull, 100.

⁴³⁷ Banchoff, "German Identity and European Integration," 276.

⁴³⁸ Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," 38.; Harnisch and Maull, 119.

⁴³⁹ Maull, "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power?'," 17.

⁴⁴⁰ Thomas Banchoff, "German Policy Towards the European Union: The Effects of Historical Memory," *ibid.* 6, no. 1 (1997): 70-71.

⁴⁴¹ Pfeil, 95-98.

⁴⁴² Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power?'," 56.

⁴⁴³ Rainer Baumann and Gunther Hellmann, "Germany and the Use of Military Force: 'Total War', the 'Culture of Restraint' and the Quest for Normality," *German Politics* 10, no. 1 (2001): 62.

civilian power Germany, a commitment to peace, and pacifistic tendencies,⁴⁴⁴ manifests itself in a determination to use political solutions, rather than use military force.⁴⁴⁵ Of critical importance, for a civilian power Germany, it is understood that more than seek to constrain its own use of force, this identity-based commitment to “national and international norms”, is a central feature of its international relationships.⁴⁴⁶ This results in a broader foreign policy orientation, in which Germany actively encourages “non-violent forms of conflict management and conflict resolution”,⁴⁴⁷ with the ultimate aim of *civilizing* international relations.⁴⁴⁸ Consequently, for a civilian power Germany, use of force is only considered acceptable, in exceedingly limited instances, in which other core values of the civilian power role concept, including multilateralism,⁴⁴⁹ defensive action, stabilizing a state, or human rights and humanitarian concerns, are at stake.⁴⁵⁰ Even then, such action is only deemed acceptable for a civilian power, once all peaceful alternatives “have been exhausted”.⁴⁵¹

2.6 Diagnostic Criteria and Interpretation

Based upon these four distinct facets of a civilian power Germany, *ideally*, its bilateral relationship with Iran would feature the following attributes:

- A commitment to multilateral, and cooperative solutions towards Iran –where relevant and applicable– even at a bilateral level.
- Promotion of normative concerns –including human rights, rule of law, democratisation, and social justice– through bilateral relations, even if this stymies other interests.

⁴⁴⁴ Tewes, 11.; Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 66.

⁴⁴⁵ "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 68.; *Germany's Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, 6.

⁴⁴⁶ "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 56.; Harnisch and Maull, 4.

⁴⁴⁷ Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," 37.; Hanns Maull, "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", *ibid.* 9, no. 2 (2000): 15.; Harnisch and Maull, 4.

⁴⁴⁸ Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," 37. Nina Philippi, "Civilian Power and War: The German Debate About out-of-Area Operations 1990-99," in *Germany as a Civilian Power?: The Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, ed. Sebastian Harnisch and Hanns Maull (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 65.

⁴⁴⁹ Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," 37.; Meier, 70.

⁴⁵⁰ Nina Philippi, "Civilian Power and War: The German Debate About out-of-Area Operations 1990-99," *ibid.*, 59.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 57.

- A subservience, or curbing, of economic interests, based upon normative concerns, or other facets of the civilian power role concept.
- A determination to seek political solutions to conflict and dispute, as well as abhorrence of potential use of military force by any parties.
- A willingness to act, and desire to civilise the international environment through its relationship.

However, since these criteria are based upon an *ideal* civilian power in action, and this role concept includes many facets, at what point would a civilian power such as Germany be considered in minimal conformance with expectations? To answer this imperative question, it is important to recognise the civilian power role concept is predicated upon a Weberian notion of an *ideal type*,⁴⁵² “which cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality”, and requires but adequacy of explanation.⁴⁵³ In this regard, the value of an *ideal* notion underlying a civilian power role concept, exists in the ability of a researcher to compare this against “empirical reality”, to consider “divergences or similarities”.⁴⁵⁴ In exemplification of this, although an ideal type civilian power is expected to actively seize opportunities to promote its normative, and value-based interests,⁴⁵⁵ it is conceded that a state can still be a civilian power, and on occasion, not actively promote certain elements of the civilian power role concept in a particular case.⁴⁵⁶ This scope for flexibility in interpretation is often attributed to the fact that a civilian power role concept is so multifaceted, it is entirely possible that one facet will emerge in conflict with another for a given case.⁴⁵⁷ For example, and as will be considered in chapter four of this thesis, a civilian power may be faced with a foreign policy dilemma, in which a genocide could be stopped in support of humanitarian interests, but to do so, would require the very use of military force it abhors.⁴⁵⁸ In this regard, it is important to understand a civilian power role concept does not exhibit a hierarchy in the normative, and value-based

⁴⁵² Harnisch and Maull, 5.

⁴⁵³ Kim.; Max Weber, "Objectivity in Social Science and Social Policy in the Methodology of the Social Sciences, E.A. Shils and H.A. Finch Ed," (New York: Free Press, 1949), 90.

⁴⁵⁴ Tewes, 20-21.

⁴⁵⁵ Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," 37.; Hanns Maull, "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power?'," *ibid.* 9, no. 2 (2000): 16.

⁴⁵⁶ Sebastian Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," *ibid.* 10, no. 1 (2001): 35.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 43-44.; Tewes, 20-21.

⁴⁵⁸ Nina Philippi, "Civilian Power and War: The German Debate About out-of-Area Operations 1990-99," *ibid.*, 62.

concerns,⁴⁵⁹ meaning all facets are equally important in an abstract sense. Instead, certain norms may appear more important in a particular case, based upon what is at stake, and how the salience of the issue is perceived to impact upon overall civilian power interests. Hence, the importance is merely that *a* facet of the civilian power role concept be evidenced to shape interest in a foreign policy case, and if it is, the hierarchy reflected in that case may inform something about the actor's wider conceptualisation of interest. The fact is, based upon constructivist thought, normative understandings in the present, inevitably change over time, and with it, so change identities, interests, and behaviour.⁴⁶⁰ This dynamic is part of what makes consideration of Germany's relationship with Iran so significant for questions of contemporary German foreign policy, identity, and interest: assumed continuity in civilian power understandings largely endure,⁴⁶¹ but questions of potential change, and claims of contradictory interests for post-unification Germany in relations with Iran, abound. Ultimately, notwithstanding these potential challenges, the coherence of expectations, and assumptions underlying a civilian power Germany are clear. It is recognised that a state is only a true civilian power, provided there are active efforts to abide by the principles underlying the role concept,⁴⁶² and the effects of such an identity, must at the very least, be evidenced to "constrain foreign policy behavior",⁴⁶³ if not fully account for it.

Conclusion

This chapter began with the intent of elaborating further upon the theoretical framework, and presenting a methodology sufficient to address the research questions of this thesis. Bearing in mind chapter one already established the critical premise that a constructivist-inspired, civilian power role concept, constitutes the theoretical framework for this thesis, the chapter chose to address the methodology, before returning to consideration of the theoretical framework. It demonstrated that for a single-case study of foreign policy, a process-tracing methodology represents a particularly efficacious approach to overcoming noted limitations of

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁰ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 21.; Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," 44.; Harnisch, Frank, and Maull, 29.; Ruggie. 14.; Sebastian Harnisch, "Germany and Eu Foreign Policy," (2018): 4.

⁴⁶¹ Banchoff, "German Identity and European Integration," 259.

⁴⁶² Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," 45.

⁴⁶³ Banchoff, "German Identity and European Integration," 262-76.

single-case studies. It was further established that a case-explaining, process-tracing methodology, in particular, not only fits with the epistemological and ontological assumptions of the theoretical framework, but specifically, operates to address questions of causality, and related explanation, which are central to this thesis. In order to answer to these questions, through such a methodology, the chapter outlined a five-step plan, allowing for a high-degree of confidence in the findings. To accomplish this, however, it was noted the methodology requires careful selection of evidence. In this manner, the chapter gave due consideration to the value of considering discourse and narratives for purposes of empirically bolstering the findings of this thesis.

As part of this five-step plan, the chapter also addressed a critical need for diagnostic criteria – derived in this case from the theoretical framework– which is why further consideration of the previously established theoretical framework was delayed until addressing the methodology. With this need demonstrated, the chapter briefly expanded upon the manner in which a constructivist analytical perspective is understood to account for foreign policy behaviour, through identity-based, interest formation. The chapter then addressed the specific expectations of Germany's adherence to a constructivist-inspired, civilian power role concept, with particular elaboration upon what a role concept is, and how this concept is particularly beneficial for determining expected behaviour.

With these fundamental considerations in mind, the chapter articulated four distinct facets of a civilian power Germany, from which a clear set of diagnostic criteria were derived. In doing so, the chapter demonstrated how the theoretical framework can operate in accordance with a case-explaining, process-tracing methodology, to ultimately allow for well-evidenced findings concerning the research questions of this thesis. Specifically, it noted that although the civilian power role concept is, indeed, multifaceted, it can nevertheless be affirmed as an explanation, provided at least one facet of the civilian power role concept is evidenced to have demonstrable effects upon post-unification Germany's relationship with Iran. Having established these critical points, it is now possible to turn to consideration of the relationship itself.

Chapter Three: Cooperation, Multilateralism, and German Foreign Policy Towards Iran

Introduction

The ability for Germany and others to reach a degree of consensus regarding Iran's nuclear program, appears in many respects, emblematic of Germany's transition from a once power-political actor, to a staunch advocate of cooperation and diplomacy. Specifically, Germany's participation in P5+1 negotiations, and the resulting Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA),⁴⁶⁴ can easily be referenced as prominent examples of multilateralism and cooperation for post-unification Germany. Furthermore, as Iran's former Ambassador to Germany, Seyyed Mousavian, states, in his personal experience, Germany's commitment to partnerships with the United States, Europe and Israel, endure not only as fundamental aspects of Germany's foreign policy in general, but remain central themes in German foreign policy towards Iran in particular.⁴⁶⁵ With such sentiments in mind, it would appear that German foreign policy vis-à-vis Iran remains consistent with a civilian power commitment to multilateralism, and a rejection of unilateral initiatives.⁴⁶⁶

However, notwithstanding such features of cooperation in the context of Iran, as noted previously, beyond negotiations over Iran's nuclear program –which are inherently multilateral and outside the scope of this thesis– post-unification German foreign policy towards Iran appears to largely problematize civilian power role expectations concerning multilateralism and cooperation, amidst Germany's often unilateral, and occasionally assertive approach.⁴⁶⁷ Although civilian power proponents highlight Germany's tendency to avoid unilateral policy initiatives,⁴⁶⁸ post-unification German foreign policy towards Iran, nevertheless, appears at times primarily driven by Germany's own initiatives and underlying

⁴⁶⁴ "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action."

⁴⁶⁵ Mousavian, 61-62.

⁴⁶⁶ Refer to chapters one and two.

⁴⁶⁷ Refer to introduction section, as well as chapters one and two.

⁴⁶⁸ Refer to chapters one and two.

interests,⁴⁶⁹ resulting in claims that as Germany solidified closer relations with Iran,⁴⁷⁰ it concurrently deviated from a cooperative policy position with the United States and other Western nations.⁴⁷¹ Critically, these are states which ostensibly comprise central aspects of its identity as a multilateral and cooperative actor.⁴⁷² Accordingly, Germany's relationship with Iran has emerged as one of the most contentious issues of post-unification Germany's relationships with the U.S. and Israel,⁴⁷³ and in turn, it provokes fundamental questions concerning civilian power explanations of German foreign policy towards Iran.

But to what extent does Germany's policy towards Iran actually challenge civilian power expectations regarding multilateralism and cooperation? Does German foreign policy towards Iran truly evidence indifference towards a cooperative approach in this case, or does interest in cooperation occur elsewhere? And if indifference does occur, then what explains Germany's underlying interest in more unilateral policy efforts? With such questions, and the overall aims of this thesis in mind, the following chapter will be addressing the multilateral and cooperation facet of Germany's civilian power role concept, in order to determine the extent to which this facet can account for post-unification German foreign policy towards Iran. In other words, the chapter to follow –similar to all forthcoming chapters– is assessing one facet of the broader civilian power role concept, in order to ultimately determine, by degrees of confidence, an underlying causality, and explanation, of German foreign policy towards Iran.

To accomplish this, the following chapter will address three relationships –the United States (U.S.), the European Union (E.U.), and Israel– ostensibly central to both post-unification Germany's multilateral identity as a civilian power,⁴⁷⁴ as well as Germany's foreign policy towards Iran.⁴⁷⁵ By addressing the manner in which Germany's policy towards Iran intersects with these core relationships, this chapter will demonstrate how such dynamics, in turn,

⁴⁶⁹ Volker Perthes, "Germany and the Gulf: On the Way to a Policy?," in *"International Interests in the Gulf: Policy Implications for the GCC Members"* (Abu Dhabi: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2004), 1-8.

⁴⁷⁰ Mousavian, 129.

⁴⁷¹ Küntzel, vii.

⁴⁷² Mousavian, 61-62.; Markovits and Reich, xiii-4.

⁴⁷³ Mousavian, 65.

⁴⁷⁴ Markovits and Reich, xiii-4.

⁴⁷⁵ Mousavian, 61-62.

provide evidence regarding Germany's conformity with the cooperative and multilateral facet of the civilian power role concept, as an explanation of its foreign policy towards Iran.

The chapter will begin by briefly addressing the underlying premise of cooperation and multilateralism, for a civilian power Germany. Once established, the chapter will first consider transatlantic (U.S.) intersections with German foreign policy towards Iran. In doing so, it further demonstrates how this relationship, in particular, accentuates the essence of Germany's unique approach and philosophy in foreign policy towards Iran. Following this, the chapter considers how Germany's approach towards Iran fits within ostensibly multilateral and cooperative European policy efforts towards Iran. In addressing this aspect, the chapter once again affirms the particular value and necessity of investigating Germany's relationship from a bilateral perspective. Lastly, this chapter considers the manner in which Germany's policy towards Iran impacts upon its espoused commitment towards Israel. In approaching it as such, this chapter ultimately aims to demonstrate that notwithstanding Germany's voiced support for multilateral and cooperative initiatives vis-à-vis Iran, the multilateral and cooperative facet of Germany's civilian power role concept, is nevertheless largely challenged by its foreign policy actions in this case, and often appears subservient to other interests.

3.1 Cooperation, Multilateralism, and a Civilian Power Germany

Before proceeding to consideration of multilateralism and cooperation in this particular case, it is vital to recall that a prevailing understanding exists within literature, which holds Germany's *historical memory* –rooted in a National Socialist past– produced a determined avoidance of unilateral policy initiatives,⁴⁷⁶ as well as engendered what many characterise as a “reflexive” or “axiomatically multilateral” German political culture.⁴⁷⁷ In this regard, Germany's commitment to multilateralism and cooperation in foreign policy, is attributed to a

⁴⁷⁶ Paterson, "Does Germany Still Have a European Vocation?," 45.; "Beyond Semi-Sovereignty: The New Germany in the New Europe," 175-77.

⁴⁷⁷ Anderson and Goodman, 30. Paterson, "Does Germany Still Have a European Vocation?," 42.; Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'," 60-61.

normative forging of contemporary German identity,⁴⁷⁸ through a coalescence of both historical, as well as *collective memory*.⁴⁷⁹ The resulting manifestation of this identity appears in Germany's constructivist-inspired, civilian power role concept, which as evidenced in chapters one and two, ostensibly accounts for Germany's interest in foreign policy, and relatedly, explains its outcomes.⁴⁸⁰ But with this understanding in mind, how exactly is such a commitment to multilateralism and cooperation expected to function for a civilian power Germany in its policy towards Iran?

Consequently, before addressing Germany's foreign policy towards Iran, in the context of multilateralism and cooperation, it is imperative to clarify the expectations of a civilian power Germany, in order to focus consideration upon whether the multilateral and cooperative facet is, indeed, evidenced in this case. In this regard, it is essential to recall that for a civilian power Germany, there is a core understanding that foreign policy aims are only possible through collaboration,⁴⁸¹ and any German *Sonderweg*, or unilateral exercise of power, is wholeheartedly rejected.⁴⁸² This "never alone" mentality of a civilian power Germany⁴⁸³ is not simply a matter of perceived efficacy, but above all, a reflection of the aforementioned normative considerations, by which, unilateral efforts are beyond moral, and social justification.⁴⁸⁴ Based upon this understanding, for post-unification Germany, supranational integration with the E.U., a desire to maintain robust transatlantic relations with the U.S., and a determination to affirm a unique bond with Israel, are all considered, to varying degrees, particularly emblematic of Germany's commitment to cooperation and multilateralism in foreign policy⁴⁸⁵ as a civilian power. The implication being: evidence of unilateral initiatives, and divergences from cooperative or multilateral positions in this case, presents an inherent challenge to civilian power explanations of German foreign policy towards Iran –and nowhere more so than with respect to its relationships with the U.S., E.U. and Israel. Accordingly, in

⁴⁷⁸ Hellmann, "Goodbye Bismarck? The Foreign Policy of Contemporary Germany," 9.; Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 691.; Bulmer and Paterson, "Germany in the European Union: Gentle Giant or Emergent Leader?," 11-12.

⁴⁷⁹ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 694. Banchoff, "German Identity and European Integration."

⁴⁸⁰ Refer to chapters one and two.

⁴⁸¹ Maull, 92-93.; Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," 37.

⁴⁸² Meier, 70.; Hanns Maull, "Germany's Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", *ibid.*, 125.; "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 56-66.

⁴⁸³ "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 67.

⁴⁸⁴ Hellmann, "Goodbye Bismarck? The Foreign Policy of Contemporary Germany," 9.; Maull, 102.

⁴⁸⁵ Markovits and Reich, xiii-4.

the case of Iran specifically, assumptions of German foreign policy and identity would anticipate Germany's policy to reflect convergence, or at least, the avoidance of interference with these core relationships. Helpfully, this means addressing Germany's relationship from such a perspective is particularly instrumental for purposes of considering whether the multilateral and cooperative facet of the civilian power role concept, can explain Germany's policy in this case. With that in mind, it is now possible to consider the case of Germany's foreign policy towards Iran.

3.2 Transatlantic Ties and the Schism of Iran Policy

For post-unification German foreign policy towards Iran, no external, or third-party relationship, has figured as prominently in the narrative, as that of the U.S. Not only has Iran represented a central theme, and source of strife within the German-American relationship over the last several decades,⁴⁸⁶ but it remains a core issue of enduring relevance, as evidenced by prominent disputes in recent years between German policymakers, and U.S. President Donald Trump.⁴⁸⁷ In this manner, German foreign policy towards Iran has a clearly identifiable impact upon its cooperative relationship with the U.S. But how exactly does Germany's foreign policy towards Iran intersect with, and impact upon its transatlantic relationship? And most importantly: to what extent does such an impact appear to confirm, or challenge, civilian power assumptions in the case of its foreign policy towards Iran?

To address such questions, and fully understand the significance of Germany's Iran policy for civilian power assumptions of cooperation and multilateralism, it is critical to appreciate that German-American relations are not only "a pillar of [...] the post-Cold War era,"⁴⁸⁸ but a core component of post-unification Germany's identity as a civilian power. For a West Germany in need of alliances following the Second World War,⁴⁸⁹ robust transatlantic ties were not

⁴⁸⁶ Refer to chapter one.

⁴⁸⁷ "Merkel Defends Jcpoa in Discussions with Trump (Translated from Persian)," *BBC Farsi* (2017), <http://www.bbc.com/persian/iran-41442127>; "German Minister: Ending Iran Deal Would Be Setback for Curbing Nuclear Arms," *Gulf News*, September 21, 2017 2017; "Merkel, Macron Und May Schmieden Anti-Trump-Allianz," *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, October 13, 2017 2017; Gardiner Harris, "European Diplomats Speak out against Trump's Opposition to the Iran Deal," *The New York Times*, September 25, 2017 2017; Thomas Seibert, "Wie Macron Und Merkel Das Atomabkommen Retten Wollen," *Der Tagesspiegel*, April 23, 2018 2018.

⁴⁸⁸ Lane, 77.

⁴⁸⁹ Paterson, "Does Germany Still Have a European Vocation?," 41.

simply a matter of necessity, but a reflection of its underlying identification as a civilian power, based upon normative understandings, and historical experiences.⁴⁹⁰ In other words, although Germany's semi-sovereign status was an undeniable incentive for multilateralism and cooperation with the United States,⁴⁹¹ its purposive assumption of a civilian power identity, featuring cooperation with a transatlantic partner, extends beyond rationalist explanations alone. The outcome was a post-war Bonn Republic, from its inception, consciously pursuing cooperation and multilateralism vis-à-vis the United States, and the sustained invocation of Germany's transatlantic partnership in present-day Berlin Republic policy narratives, has in turn, served to evidence its continued relevancy to post-unification German foreign policy. In exemplification of this point, successive coalition governments have invoked Germany's transatlantic commitment in a myriad of foreign policy situations, ranging from former Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel's argument that Germany needed to demonstrate "solidarity" with Washington in its Balkans policy during the 1990s,⁴⁹² to Chancellor Gerhard Schröder espousing "unlimited solidarity" with the United States "drawn from history",⁴⁹³ in affirming Germany's support for the U.S. following the terror attacks of September 11, 2001. In this manner, there is not only strong evidence to suggest post-unification continuity in Germany's civilian power commitment to cooperation and multilateralism vis-à-vis the United States, but major policy divergences between the transatlantic partners over Iran relations, would in turn, appear to challenge expectations concerning this commitment.

With this in mind, it is fairly unsurprising that in the years preceding Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution –as West German foreign policy strived to convey its reliability as a partner of the U.S.–⁴⁹⁴ Bonn had assumed a relatively consistent policy with Washington towards Tehran.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹⁰ Ruth Wittlinger and Martin Larose, "No Future for Germany's Past? Collective Memory and German Foreign Policy," *ibid.* 16, no. 4 (2007): 483-84.

⁴⁹¹ William E Paterson, "Does Germany Still Have a European Vocation?," *ibid.* 19, no. 1 (2010): 41.; "The Reluctant Hegemon? Germany Moves Centre Stage in the European Union," *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 49 (2011): 58.; "Beyond Semi-Sovereignty: The New Germany in the New Europe," 175-76.

⁴⁹² Ruth Wittlinger and Martin Larose, "No Future for Germany's Past? Collective Memory and German Foreign Policy," *ibid.* 16, no. 4 (2007): 487.

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.*, 488.

⁴⁹⁴ Joseph S Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, no. 1 (2008): 106-07.

⁴⁹⁵ Lane, 85.

In doing so, many of the antecedents concerning Germany's foreign policy towards Iran would appear to confirm a committed transatlantic partner, and suggest its conformity with civilian power expectations. However, despite initial convergences over Iran policy, following the Islamic Revolution, Iran in fact appeared to represent something of a catalyst for West Germany to express its growing assertiveness, independence, and at times, divergent policy interests. In 1984, Werner Marx, then head of the *Bundestag* Foreign Affairs Committee, went so far as to argue, digression from the U.S. position towards Iran serves to "make it clear to the Iranians that we are not a passive satellite of the Americans but their close ally of our own free will."⁴⁹⁶ More than simply representing a means of conveying free will, however, Germany's growing disregard for American interests in its Iran policy appeared emblematic of its keen determination to show Tehran that Germany possessed a subjective geopolitical understanding. This included prominent examples within discourse, ranging from former German Foreign Minister Hanns Dietrich Genscher –a key architect of Germany's Iran policy–⁴⁹⁷ emphasizing his sympathy towards Iran, and a rejection its perceived historic "domination by the colonial powers",⁴⁹⁸ to German Ministers explicitly chastising what they saw as "American [...] antagonism toward Iran and their hostility to [...] warm relations between Germany and Iran".⁴⁹⁹ These were ultimately narratives that Tehran took note of.⁵⁰⁰

Such narratives notwithstanding, during the early years of unification, the tendency of Berlin to exhibit support for U.S. foreign policy endeavours in the wider Middle East region,⁵⁰¹ initially engendered optimism for Iran, that Germany –a historically robust partner of Tehran–⁵⁰² could serve as an arbiter of disputes between Tehran and Washington.⁵⁰³ In fact, some key collaborations to this effect were witnessed, including the George H.W. Bush administration's use of German backchannels with Tehran, to seek the release of American

⁴⁹⁶ Küntzel, 141-42.

⁴⁹⁷ "Helmut Kohl: Role of Former Chancellor in Solving Difficulties between Iran and the West (Translated from Persian)," BBC Farsi, <http://www.bbc.com/persian/world-features-40319795>.

⁴⁹⁸ Hans-Dietrich Genscher, "Erinnerungen (Berlin: Siedler)," *Douglas Webber* 25 (1995): 351.

⁴⁹⁹ Küntzel, 171.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., 171-3.

⁵⁰¹ Guido Steinberg, "German Middle East and North Africa Policy," ed. Guido Steinberg (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2009), 6.; Perthes, 10.

⁵⁰² Mousavian, 11-60.

⁵⁰³ Reissner, 36.

hostages held by Lebanese militants.⁵⁰⁴ Despite initial optimism over collaboration, however, Iran emerged as a key, and recurrent issue between unified Germany and American officials,⁵⁰⁵ with striking, and sometimes acrimonious differences, accentuating deep divisions between the two countries regarding underlying policy approaches, as well as foreign policy philosophies.⁵⁰⁶ In this sense, German foreign policy towards Iran is particularly significant within the transatlantic context, for accentuating differences, rather than similarities, between the U.S. and Germany. And, these differences gained further salience, as the noted “conflict of goals between the primacy of transatlantic relations and Germany’s fundamental interest in a policy of non-exclusion”⁵⁰⁷ came to the forefront of its Iran strategy.

3.2.1 Divergent Tactics and Foreign Policy Perspectives

In this manner, to fully appreciate the extent to which German-American relations are impacted by Germany’s foreign policy towards Iran, and may in turn, evidence a challenge to civilian power expectations, it is vital to both understand the precise manner in which Germany and the U.S. have pursued different policies, as well as consider what these differing approaches inform about their underlying interests in foreign policy. As noted in chapter one, during the early years of German unification, the United States pursued a policy of *containment* towards Iran⁵⁰⁸ –aimed at isolating them over concerns including support for terrorism, as well as suspected proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)–⁵⁰⁹ and the manifestation of this policy, largely occurred through implementation of a myriad of unilateral, as well as multilateral sanctions.⁵¹⁰ For the United States, its Iran policy was essentially focused upon preserving regional security, and stability, as well as mitigating Tehran’s projection of influence in the region,⁵¹¹ by which, the approach found itself largely predicated upon a rationalist theoretical perspective of foreign policy,⁵¹² in contrast to the

⁵⁰⁴ Lane, 79.

⁵⁰⁵ Mousavian, 3-4.

⁵⁰⁶ Refer to chapter one.

⁵⁰⁷ Johannes Reissner, "Iran," in *German Middle East and North Africa Policy*, ed. Guido Steinberg (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik 2009), 47.

⁵⁰⁸ Indyk.

⁵⁰⁹ Pinto, 101.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹¹ Reissner, 41.

⁵¹² Struwe, 6.

constructivist perspective known to underpin prevailing understandings of post-unification Germany as a civilian power.⁵¹³ In this sense, the essence of policy differences largely exist along theoretical lines, and disagreement between the two states over Iran policy does not, intrinsically, evidence a rejection of civilian power explanations of Germany's policy towards Iran. In fact, surprisingly, it may even serve to confirm such an explanation. With regard to the question of cooperation and multilateralism vis-à-vis the U.S. over Iran, however, whereas the foremost concern for the U.S. centred upon preserving the status quo of regional security, amidst preoccupations including proliferation, Germany and its European cohorts instead chose a strategy of *dialogue*, ostensibly aspiring to modify Iranian behaviour and policy, as well as empower moderate Iranian political factions through contact and *engagement*.⁵¹⁴

The difference in tactics was striking, notwithstanding the fact many noted Germany and the United States shared similar long-term goals and interests in the region.⁵¹⁵ President Clinton and successive U.S. administrations attempted to highlight these fundamentally shared interests –particularly during the 1990s when the policy disagreements escalated for the first time– in order to encourage Germany to cooperate in isolating Iran through sanctions efforts.⁵¹⁶ According to former U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, the administration “constantly prodded [Germany] to distance themselves from Iran”.⁵¹⁷ Nevertheless, Germany's resolve to diverge from this partner –so central to its civilian power legacy of cooperation and multilateralism– over Iran, endured, seemingly “no matter how compelling the evidence of Iranian misbehavior”.⁵¹⁸ In fact, and most insightfully in this regard, rather than merely avoid collaboration with Washington in its policy of isolation, Germany instead emerged as a flag-bearer of opposition to U.S. strategy, and actively encouraged its European allies to avoid bowing to U.S. pressure over Iran.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹³ Refer to chapters one and two.

⁵¹⁴ Reissner, 33-44.

⁵¹⁵ Lane, 77.; Pinto, 103.; Perthes, 18.; Struwe, 34.

⁵¹⁶ Küntzel, 169.;

⁵¹⁷ Warren Christopher, *In the Stream of History: Shaping Foreign Policy for a New Era* (Stanford University Press, 1998), 442.

⁵¹⁸ Pinto, 101.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid., 103.

But what exactly underpinned this ardent determination by Germany to pursue such an approach towards Iran? And what does this, in turn, inform about the significance of multilateralism and cooperation vis-à-vis the U.S. for Germany's foreign policy towards Iran? To answer such questions, it is particularly helpful to begin with consideration of Germany's reaction to a U.S. escalation of its containment strategy in the 1990s, as this reaction not only accentuates Germany's determination to pursue its own approach, but further highlights potential underlying interests behind Germany's efforts in this regard.

With this in mind it is critical to note that in the 1990s, the U.S. containment approach further escalated with passage of the Iran Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA) –also known as the “D’Amato” bill⁵²⁰– in 1996, as well as sharpened rhetoric, such as Warren Christopher's prominent characterisation that Iran constituted an “international outlaw”, and pariah worth isolating.⁵²¹ The significance of this escalation for Germany was twofold. Firstly, the bill implied a determination by the U.S. to further isolate Iran going forward, in stark contrast to Germany's emerging approach of engagement and dialogue. And secondly, U.S. sanctions could now potentially impact third-party countries such as Germany.⁵²² Bearing these implications in mind, it is revealing to consider intensification of this U.S. strategy, in fact, had the effect of infuriating German policymakers, and leading both Chancellor Helmut Kohl as well as German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, to threaten, in person, “sharp retaliatory measures” against Washington, provided the Act's sanctions were applied to German firms.⁵²³ In the eyes of Germany, the ILSA was “extraterritorial” in its application, and Germany, in partnership with its European allies, even sought legal arbitration with the World Trade Organization (WTO) before reaching eventual resolution of the matter with Washington personally.⁵²⁴

Accordingly, and notwithstanding the patent transatlantic disagreements that came with it, “Germany's fundamental interest in a policy of non-exclusion”,⁵²⁵ or *Nichtausgrenzen*,⁵²⁶ was

⁵²⁰ Struwe, 34.

⁵²¹ Reissner, 41.

⁵²² Ibid.; Matthias Küntzel, “Germany and a Nuclear Iran,” *Jewish Political Studies Review* 26, no. 1/2 (2014): 53.

⁵²³ “Germany and a Nuclear Iran,” 53.

⁵²⁴ Pinto, 104.

⁵²⁵ Reissner, 47.

⁵²⁶ 40.

consistently maintained, or at most, marginally reformulated, in its Iran policy. In this manner, it is particularly revealing that implementation of the ILSA, in fact resulted in a marked increase of Germany's trade and commercial relations with Iran –in clear defiance of its core, multilateral and cooperative partners in Washington– and ultimately conveyed Germany's resolve to pursue its own interests in foreign policy towards Iran.⁵²⁷ In other words, it was not simply a further entrenchment of Germany's "engagement plus trade" strategy, in contrast with Washington's "isolation plus sanction",⁵²⁸ but a clear indication that Germany's subjective interests in foreign policy towards Iran, could potentially come before the transatlantic relationship itself.

Although Germany's underlying interests in this sense, appear somewhat ambiguous, the centrality of economic ties to its strategy, in turn, engendered further narratives within the transatlantic context, suggesting economic interests of questionable morality accounted for Germany's approach.⁵²⁹ Speaking at George Washington University in August 1996, President Clinton conveyed his belief on the subject, in stating that:

*"you cannot do business with countries that practice commerce with you by day while funding or protecting the terrorists [...] by night. That is wrong. I hope and expect that before long our allies will come around to accepting this fundamental truth."*⁵³⁰

As a consequence, one of the most significant implications of Germany's policy conflict with the U.S. over Iran, is further encouragement of an economic hypothesis of Germany's underlying interest in the relationship, and related suggestions of moral indifference. However, despite the appearance of economic themes within this transatlantic context, it is also critical to note, Germany's disagreement with the U.S. over Iran, extends well beyond a strictly economic theme alone, and illuminates other potential explanations of post-unification German foreign policy towards Iran as well.

⁵²⁷ Bergenäs, 501.

⁵²⁸ Ibid.

⁵²⁹ Reissner, 41.; Lane, 79-82.

⁵³⁰ Bill Clinton, "Remarks on International Security Issues at George Washington University" (George Washington University, August 5, 1996).

In this regard, although negotiations over Iran's nuclear program are beyond the scope of this thesis, it is nevertheless important to note that Germany's transatlantic differences over isolating Iran, also manifested themselves in such a context as well. In the early 2000s, as Western concern and preoccupation with the subject of WMDs increased, revelations of Iran's nuclear program emerged as a preeminent issue of global policy. Despite mutual concern between the U.S. and Germany on the subject, rather than serve as a basis for policy cooperation, the result was, revealingly, further disagreement over appropriate action and response towards the issue.⁵³¹ In other words, even when the goal of their respective policy approaches concerning a particular issue was shared, and economic interests less readily apparent, the schism dividing the two actors only widened further. While the United States strived to refer suspected violations of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) –of which Iran is a signatory– to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), in hopes of further isolating Iran through sanctions, Germany conversely, intensified its discussions with Tehran, and even expanded trade relations during the key negotiating years of 2003 and 2005.⁵³²

The result being: notwithstanding Germany's previously espoused "unlimited solidarity" with Washington,⁵³³ Berlin's approach towards Iran only escalated in this context as well, and bespoke continued indifference to U.S. efforts. Most striking, Germany's subjective policy positions again extended beyond an agree-to-disagree type scenario, and entailed outright opposition towards U.S. attempts to isolate Iran over its nuclear program, despite ostensibly shared interests on the issue. In exemplification of this dynamic, in December 2006, as the U.S. managed to see passage of UNSC Resolution 1737,⁵³⁴ Germany assumed a conspicuously dissenting voice –despite their ultimate vote in favour of the Resolution. Furthermore, when Tehran failed to establish compliance with the Resolution,⁵³⁵ and the permanent members of the UNSC, as well as Germany debated over how to proceed, Germany assumed the single dissenting position amongst Western parties, on the grounds that stronger sanctions were not

⁵³¹ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, viii.

⁵³² "Germany and a Nuclear Iran," 52-53.

⁵³³ Wittlinger and Larose, 488.

⁵³⁴ This resolution called upon Iran to halt all enrichment efforts, and threatened further sanctions. United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 1737," (New York 2006).

⁵³⁵ Küntzel, "Germany and a Nuclear Iran," 54.

conducive to resolving underlying issues with Iran.⁵³⁶ Nearly a year later, Germany still opposed U.S.-backed attempts to implement further sanctions against Tehran for its nuclear program,⁵³⁷ and established thereby, a penchant for serving as the lone Western sanctions-buster at the United Nations (U.N.). According to some observers, the calculus for Germany in this regard is simple: “rebut the charge of appeasement and abide by its fundamental position of non-exclusion.”⁵³⁸ Nevertheless, simple or not, and underlying interests aside, the implication is undeniably a lack preoccupation with the transatlantic relationship when assuming such an approach. Moreover, the symbolic significance of Germany’s dissent from the U.S., France, and the United Kingdom, in a forum epitomizing multilateralism and cooperation, is highly revealing, and speaks volumes about the manner in which Germany’s policy towards Iran appears to challenge civilian power commitments to multilateralism and cooperation.

What then, do such divergences from the United States, inform about German foreign policy towards Iran in general, and the significance of multilateralism and cooperation in particular? As noted, narratives concerning this impassioned pursuit of policy independent from Washington, have advanced hypotheses of commercial and economic interests, as well as debt owed to Germany⁵³⁹—a subject to be addressed in greater detail in chapter five. As a result, a refusal to embrace sanctions could, despite manifesting beyond an explicitly economic context at times, still suggest Germany’s opposition is based on preserving existing, or future interests, of a more rationalist and materialist nature. Given many U.S.-led sanctions in the case of Iran legally prohibit, or constrain economic transactions, such a policy, on the surface, would appear consistent with narratives implying that an underlying trade or commercial interest, explains the consistent aversion to supporting such measures. Importantly, considering previous chapters established a key premise that the civilian power role interests are expected to come before rationalist, and materialist considerations,⁵⁴⁰ should Germany’s opposition to multilateral efforts be attributable to strictly rationalist and materialist considerations, this would not only challenge expectations concerning multilateralism and cooperation, but also

⁵³⁶ Ibid.

⁵³⁷ Ibid., 55.

⁵³⁸ Reissner, 51.

⁵³⁹ Pinto, 101-05.; Lane, 77-89.; Reissner, 34-47.

⁵⁴⁰ Refer to chapters one and two.

that of the civilian power role concept, as an overall explanation for German foreign policy towards Iran. But to what extent might this aversion to cooperation with the U.S. over sanctions be explained by non-economic factors as well?

With this question in mind, it is insightful to recognise that core to Germany's sanctions aversion vis-à-vis the U.S., is a quintessentially German reluctance to pressure states in such a manner, based upon "historical, cultural, and psychological" factors.⁵⁴¹ During the Cold War, Germany's pursuit of détente and dialogue towards East Germany, through *Ostpolitik*, underscored not only a German determination to avoid isolation of target countries in foreign policy, but an overarching desire to induce substantive political "change through rapprochement," or, *Wandel durch Annäherung*.⁵⁴² Critically, many in Germany believe this intrinsically German strategy –initially formed independent of cooperation with Western partners such as the U.S.– was essential to positively shaping relations with Eastern Bloc countries, and even facilitated the Soviet Union's eventual collapse –something many Germans deemed impossible by relying upon traditional power machinations, or isolation alone.⁵⁴³ In this regard, an *Ostpolitik*-inspired approach from Germany appears to convey a cultural affinity for "détente and constructive engagement", as a key underlying "philosophy" of German foreign policy.⁵⁴⁴ As others have noted, Germany's pursuit of *Ostpolitik*, in a historic sense, was not only quintessentially German, but further emblematic of a desire to establish some degree of policy independence from the United States, in a time and place in which West Germany was incapable of doing so.⁵⁴⁵ Accordingly, such a foreign policy perspective is not only ostensibly emblematic of underlying German interest, but also predicated upon demonstrating a capacity to act in pursuit of such interests, independent of the transatlantic cooperative framework.

As a consequence, there is profound significance in the unmistakable parallels between West Germany's historic *Ostpolitik*, and what is characterised as post-unification Germany's assumption of a "*new-Ostpolitik*" foreign policy towards Iran,⁵⁴⁶ entailing "engagement rather

⁵⁴¹ Reissner, 39.

⁵⁴² Schönhoven.; Reissner, 48.; Lane, 78-79.

⁵⁴³ 78-79.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid., 78.

⁵⁴⁵ Paterson, "Does Germany Still Have a European Vocation?," 43.

⁵⁴⁶ Lane, 77-89.

than coercion".⁵⁴⁷ Even more significant still, when appreciating that such an *Ostpolitik*-inspiration for Germany's Iran policy, ostensibly entails "strong moral overtones", far beyond rationalist and materialist explanations alone.⁵⁴⁸ In this regard, although Germany's determination to pursue an *Ostpolitik*-inspired strategy in this case might challenge assumptions of a civilian power in terms of cooperation and multilateralism, the implementation of such a policy does not inherently evidence a rationalist and materialist basis of interest. The implication being: although Germany's philosophical aversion to sanctions and isolation is not, in and of itself, sufficient for determining whether Germany's underlying interest towards Iran is more rationalist, or consistent with civilian power assumptions, it does, however, critically evidence that Germany's interests, as such, clearly take precedence over cooperation and multilateralism with the U.S. In this sense, when viewing German foreign policy towards Iran from the perspective of its core relationship with the U.S., what one sees evidenced conclusively, is a unified Germany, from its inception, acting as a determined, and even somewhat assertive state.

Despite a myriad of attempts by Washington to entice Germany to follow its strategy in the years preceding Barack Obama's election in 2008, Berlin held fast throughout this period, and never exhibited any meaningful convergence with Washington in conceptualisation, or implementation of its foreign policy toward Iran. Whereas changing U.S. administrations underscored an ebb and flow of measures against Iran, Germany conversely, exhibited striking continuity across its post-unification coalition governments, by never advocating a complete severance of its diplomatic efforts, or tangible change in overall strategy preceding Obama's election as President. It is imperative, however, to note, that for purposes of considering multilateralism and cooperation, following Barack Obama's 2008 election –and preceding the Trump administration– Germany and the U.S. exhibited a surprising convergence in strategies. This even entailed an exceedingly rare German endorsement of certain sanctions against Iran, culminating in a 2012 Iranian oil embargo.⁵⁴⁹ Given an

⁵⁴⁷ Perthes, 13.

⁵⁴⁸ William E Paterson, "Helmut Kohl, 'the Vision Thing' and Escaping the Semi-Sovereignty Trap," *German Politics* 7, no. 1 (1998): 23.

⁵⁴⁹ European Union External Action Service, "Eu Imposes Fresh Round of Sanctions on Iran," news release, 01/23/2012,

established tendency on the part of Germany to avoid sanctions at nearly all costs, such a rare willingness by Germany to support sanctions against Iran during the Obama administration, appears as a profound challenge to, and perplexing deviation from, Germany's otherwise consistent strategy. In occurring as such, despite clear evidence that Germany often acted with indifference to its transatlantic relationship in the context of Iran policy, it nevertheless suggests there may, in fact, be some capacity for it to shape Germany's policy toward Iran. With this in mind, what does Germany's apparent convergence with the U.S. over Iran during the Obama-era actually inform about Germany's commitment to multilateralism and cooperation? And did this apparent convergence factually portend a change in Germany's foreign policy, or interests toward Iran?

Critically, in this regard, inferring that Germany's "'dual track' approach of diplomacy and sanctions"⁵⁵⁰ during this period evidences a German movement towards the U.S. strategy, appears to reflect analysis from an incorrect vantage point. Bearing the timing of an apparent convergence of strategies in mind, the approximation corresponds to the election of Barack Obama, and the winding down of the Bush administration. President George W. Bush's administration took a hard line towards Iran –which it considered to be a cornerstone of the "axis of evil"⁵⁵¹ – in stark contrast to Germany's *Outpolitik*-inspired dialogue.⁵⁵² The Obama administration, however, assumed an entirely different mentality concerning Iran from the outset. Obama stated on the campaign trail that should he be elected President, his administration would be willing to hold substantive negotiations with Iran, in a dialogue-like format⁵⁵³ –a development that understandably provoked excitement in Berlin.⁵⁵⁴ In fact, analysis published by the German government took particular note of then candidate Barack Obama's explicit scepticism regarding the efficacy of a sanctions-based approach, referencing a statement that unlike his democratic rival Hillary Clinton, he personally felt sanctions could inadvertently precipitate use of military force, by limiting options.⁵⁵⁵ With expression of this

http://collections.internetmemory.org/haeu/content/20160313172652/http://eeas.europa.eu/top_stories/2012/230112_iran_en.htm.

⁵⁵⁰ Adebahr, 77.

⁵⁵¹ George W. Bush, "Text of President Bush's State of the Union Address," (2002).

⁵⁵² Reissner, 48.

⁵⁵³ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 242.

⁵⁵⁴ "Germany and a Nuclear Iran," 55.

⁵⁵⁵ Deutscher Bundestag, "Iran: Teherans Hegemoniale Und Nukleare Interessen Und Die Haltung Der Internationalen Gemeinschaft," ed. Wissenschaftliche Dienst (Berlin2008), 15.

sentiment, not only did the Berlin Republic's long-held strategy of dialogue appear validated by emerging political forces in the U.S., but an underlying German concern that isolation of Iran could precipitate use of force and result in another Iraq War,⁵⁵⁶ was significantly reduced. With this sense of validation in mind, Germany in fact increased its interface with key Iranian policymakers, leading former Chancellor Gerhard Schröder to visit Tehran as a high-profile envoy,⁵⁵⁷ and following Obama's election, the U.S. approach became one of engagement and diplomacy, to complement existing pressure-based mechanisms.⁵⁵⁸ Thus, in reality, the apparent convergence of strategies towards Iran by the transatlantic partners, more accurately underscored a philosophical approximation of the U.S. strategy under Obama, towards that of Germany's, rather than the other way around. In this manner, although more deeply embracing a *dual track* approach might imply a shift in Germany's strategy on the surface, in truth, Germany's foreign policy efforts merely entailed an intensification of its existing dialogue and diplomacy, rather than indicated a reduction in such efforts, occasional sanctions notwithstanding.

In exemplification of this dynamic, when asked in the *Bundestag* "what interests the government is pursuing" by a perceived movement towards entertaining sanctions during the Obama era, the reply was "to move Iran back to the negotiating table, to reach a diplomatic solution."⁵⁵⁹ In this manner, Germany appeared more willing to entertain implementation of sanctions and embargoes of oil, amidst what they viewed as an administration in Washington more closely aligned with its interests, and not aspiring to wholeheartedly isolate Iran, but rather, to surgically pressure Tehran towards further negotiation, and a prevention of non-diplomatic alternatives. In other words, it was a convergence predicated upon Germany's perception of cooperation uniquely beneficial to its own interests, including the prevention of an escalation capable of impacting economic and non-economic interests alike. After all, post-unification Germany had demonstrated a willingness to apply sanctions in a myriad of other instances, ranging from calls by Kohl for sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro,⁵⁶⁰ to

⁵⁵⁶ Adebahr, 42.

⁵⁵⁷ Küntzel, "Germany and a Nuclear Iran."

⁵⁵⁸ Reissner, 47-48.

⁵⁵⁹ Die Bundesregierung, "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Das Iranische Atomprogramm Und Die Verhängung Von Sanktionen Seitens Der Eu Gegen Iran," ed. Deutscher Bundestag (2010).

⁵⁶⁰ Michael E Smith, "Sending the Bundeswehr to the Balkans: The Domestic Politics of Reflexive Multilateralism," *German Politics & Society* 14, no. 4 (1996): 51.

Merkel's coalition government advocating sanctions against North Korea.⁵⁶¹ Accordingly, an aversion to Iran sanctions is less emblematic of opposition to sanctions per se, and more indicative of a German determination to sustain a policy of dialogue and *Nichtausgrenzung* in its foreign policy toward Iran, even provided this challenges multilateral cooperation with the U.S.

3.2.2 A First Instance of German Foreign Policy Assertiveness Toward the U.S.

The significance of Germany's determination to forge its own policy towards Iran in the post-unification era, not only captures it behaving as a unilaterally capable, foreign policy actor, but critically, demonstrates a key, initial instance of German foreign policy independence from the U.S. Presently, literature, and even official German policy documents, characterise Schröder's disinclination to support a U.S. invasion of Iraq as a "first strong sign of foreign policy independence" from the U.S.⁵⁶² However, this distinctive German strategy towards Iran, emerging in clear contrast and defiance of its transatlantic relationship in the early years of unification, evidences German foreign policy independence vis-à-vis the U.S. occurred far earlier than currently accepted. Although an appearance of convergences emerged between Germany and the U.S. during the Obama era, these policy approximations are not, in fact, attributable to any meaningful change in Germany's strategy or interest, but instead serve to further validate German interest in Iran relations beyond the scope of multilateralism and cooperation with the U.S. This is further bolstered by the manner in which Germany's differences with the U.S. over Iran strategy were evidenced to increase under the Trump administration. Accordingly, with regards to the transatlantic intersection of German foreign policy toward Iran, it would appear expectations of Germany's commitment to a cooperative facet of the civilian power role concept is far from confirmed, and, in fact, greatly challenged. With this in mind, it is essential to turn consideration towards Germany's other key

⁵⁶¹ "Berlin Begrüßt Verschärfte Sanktionen Gegen Nordkorea", *Zeit Online*, August 9, 2017 2017.

⁵⁶² Deutscher Bundestag, "Die Nahostpolitik Deutschlands Und Russlands Seit 1991," ed. Wissenschaftliche Dienst (Deutscher Bundestag, 2016), 5.; Stephen Szabo, "Parting Ways: The German-American Relationship after Iraq," in *Germany's Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, ed. Hanns Maull (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 132.;

relationships in the context of Iran, to see if this challenge extends beyond the U.S. context alone.

3.3 German and European Unity Over Iran?

Having demonstrated in the transatlantic context that Germany is capable of pursuing a foreign policy towards Iran which challenges civilian power assumptions of cooperation and multilateralism, it now becomes essential to consider another key relationship in this context: the E.U. As noted in chapter one, German foreign policy is largely assumed within existing literature, to fall under the auspices of multilateralism with the European Union,⁵⁶³ and narratives within German policy documents reference Iran as a key realm of collaboration for E.U. member states.⁵⁶⁴ In this regard, although one aspect of Germany's core, cooperative and multilateral relationships was not evidenced to meaningfully affect its foreign policy towards Iran, expectations are particularly high concerning cooperation and multilateralism with Europe. Moreover, if Germany's foreign policy towards Iran –despite underscoring a quintessentially German strategy– is truly emblematic of collective European policy efforts, to what extent is a bilateral level of investigation truly necessary, or even legitimate? With such questions in mind, analysis of European intersections with the relationship are paramount, not only for determining whether civilian power assumptions of multilateralism and cooperation can, in fact, explain Germany's relationship with Iran, but also, for confirming the particular legitimacy of the approach envisaged in this thesis.

3.3.1 European Cooperation and Germany's Civilian Power Identity

In order to address these questions, however, it is firstly essential to appreciate that following the Second World War, multilateralism vis-à-vis Europe became accepted as a central

⁵⁶³ Refer to chapter one.

⁵⁶⁴ Bundestag, "Die Nahostpolitik Deutschlands Und Russlands Seit 1991," 5-6.

“normative value”,⁵⁶⁵ or “value informing”⁵⁶⁶ feature of German foreign policy. The resulting establishment of an “identity around a European vocation”,⁵⁶⁷ in turn, was understood to constitute a fundamental basis of interest for Germany, leading former Chancellor Helmut Kohl to posit: “German interests [occur] self-evidently within the framework of our European responsibility.”⁵⁶⁸ Indeed, a European identity, and related interest, not only commanded public respect, but led to consensus across party lines in the *Bundestag*.⁵⁶⁹ The resulting “culture of restraint”, and “leadership avoidance reflex” in German foreign policy efforts,⁵⁷⁰ accordingly meant for many, that Germany’s desire for European cooperation and multilateralism represented an inherent, and arguably, most central aspect of Germany’s post-war foreign policy identity as a civilian power.⁵⁷¹ Although notable differences between Germany and other E.U. states have occurred at times, Germany’s dedication to European cooperation and multilateralism, as an ostensible civilian power, is considered most discernible in the realm of foreign and security policies.⁵⁷² In this manner, unilateral German foreign policy efforts toward Iran, at the expense of collective European initiatives, would present a particularly severe challenge to assumptions of post-unification German foreign policy, identity, and interest, as a civilian power.

3.3.2 An Emerging “European” Approach Toward Iran?

⁵⁶⁵ Charlie Jeffery and William Paterson, “Germany and European Integration: A Shifting of Tectonic Plates,” *West European Politics* 26, no. 4 (2003): 62.; Alister Miskimmon and William Paterson, “Adapting to Europe? German Foreign Policy, Domestic Constraints, and the Limitations of Europeanization since Unification,” in *Germany’s Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, ed. Hanns Maull (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 42.

⁵⁶⁶ Goetz, 36.

⁵⁶⁷ Paterson, “Beyond Semi-Sovereignty: The New Germany in the New Europe,” 167.

⁵⁶⁸ Banchoff, “German Identity and European Integration,” 275.

⁵⁶⁹ Paterson, “Beyond Semi-Sovereignty: The New Germany in the New Europe,” 169.; Hellmann, “Goodbye Bismarck? The Foreign Policy of Contemporary Germany,” 20.; August Pradetto, “The Polity of German Foreign Policy: Changes since Unification,” in *Germany’s Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, ed. Hanns Maull (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 23.

⁵⁷⁰ Paterson, “Beyond Semi-Sovereignty: The New Germany in the New Europe,” 170.

⁵⁷¹ Jeffery and Paterson, 62.; Pradetto, 22-30.

⁵⁷² Alister Miskimmon and William Paterson, “Adapting to Europe? German Foreign Policy, Domestic Constraints, and the Limitations of Europeanization since Unification,” *ibid.*, ed. Hanns Maull, 29-42.; Banchoff, “German Identity and European Integration,” 259-60.; Maull, *Germany’s Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, 1-5.; Pradetto, 15-26.; Sebastian Harnisch and Siegfried Schieder, “Germany’s New European Policy: Weaker, Leaner, Meaner,” *ibid.*, 99.

With these premises in mind, ratification of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992⁵⁷³ –which aspired to forge a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)⁵⁷⁴ by all member states– appeared as a significant development, both with respect to Germany’s assumed interest in post-unification policy collaboration with Europe, and the future of German foreign policy toward Iran itself. For a Germany ostensibly committed to furthering European cooperation in its foreign policy, such events suggested the increasing likelihood that Germany would pursue its relationship with Iran, within a largely European effort. Indeed, features of German foreign policy toward Iran have, in turn, led many to frame the relationship as a component of “European” relations,⁵⁷⁵ in which Germany, albeit prominent, is often assumed preoccupied with, or potentially subservient to, supranational considerations in its diplomatic endeavours.⁵⁷⁶ As a result, some have posited *European* interests constitute a fundamental aspect of Germany’s interest formation in Iran relations, by which a perceived willingness to collaborate with E.U. states over Iran, supposedly evidences both Germany’s interest in further integration, as well as prioritisation of normative considerations in the implementation of its foreign policy.⁵⁷⁷

Regardless of whether a civilian power commitment to European multilateralism and cooperation can account for Germany’s behaviour in this case, it is well evidenced that Iran constituted an original test case for collective foreign policy action of the ascendant E.U. The E.U., as demonstrated by its foreign policy integration efforts, such as the CFSP and other mechanisms, sought not only to emerge as a central advocate for normative-based foreign policy,⁵⁷⁸ and “non-proliferation” globally,⁵⁷⁹ but above all, and through such advocacies, it aimed to establish its competency as a global political actor, proportional to its economic influence.⁵⁸⁰ Meanwhile, Iran’s role as a suspected proliferator of WMDs, and a major

⁵⁷³ Council of the European Communities and Commission of the European Communities, "Treaty on European Union," (Maastricht: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1992).

⁵⁷⁴ Bergenäs, 494.

⁵⁷⁵ Adebahr.; Mousavian.; Struwe.; Alcaro, *Europe and Iran’s Nuclear Crisis: Lead Groups and Eu Foreign Policy-Making.*; Bergenäs.; Gerrard Quille and Rory Keane, "The Eu and Iran: Towards a New Political and Security Dialogue," in *Europe and Iran: Perspectives on Non-Proliferation*, ed. Shannon Kile (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).; Kaussler, "Iran-Europe Relations: Challenges and Opportunities."; "European Union Constructive Engagement with Iran (2000–2004): An Exercise in Conditional Human Rights Diplomacy."; Sabet-Saeidi.

⁵⁷⁶ Perthes, 13.

⁵⁷⁷ Struwe, 5-18.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁹ Bergenäs, 496.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., 496-505.; Mousavian, 77.

preoccupation for U.S. policymakers, made them an ideal goal for any state, or collection of states, desiring to establish their credentials as a capable actor and negotiator. With these factors in mind, as stated by a key figure in Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the time: "EU involvement in [...] talks with Iran [was] an example for the Union's ambition to become involved in big issues."⁵⁸¹

To bring such goals to fruition, however, leveraging existing relationship networks with countries or regions of policy interest remained essential.⁵⁸² Considering Germany had already cultivated robust ties with Iran, Berlin was well positioned to spearhead E.U. policy endeavours in the region, and going forward, Germany could serve as a preeminent liaison between Europe and Iran. This similarly meant, however, that Germany held many of the E.U.'s cards concerning Iran, and would wield significant influence over the design and implementation of an ostensibly "European" policy. In this manner, if one is to establish confidence that Germany's commitment to European cooperation and multilateralism remains a factor behind its policy towards Iran, this necessitates establishing Germany's interests and policy efforts are at least consistent with the E.U.'s, if not ultimately subservient to them. Conversely, if Germany's interests appear to exist beyond the explanatory capacity of E.U. interests, this would downgrade confidence in European cooperation as a key influence upon German policy efforts toward Iran.

3.3.3 Whose Policy and Interests?

With this in mind, it is imperative to recognise the official establishment of a "dialogue" approach with Tehran, resulted from the European Council's 1992 Edinburgh meeting, in which E.U. members collectively espoused a desire for such a strategy, "given Iran's importance in the region."⁵⁸³ In this manner, it would appear on the surface, that a dialogue-based policy, albeit based upon a quintessentially German strategy, is nevertheless consistent with European interests. Of profound significance, however, the E.U.'s official decision to pursue this approach, is attributed within literature to German inspiration for "Europe's"

⁵⁸¹ Bergenäs, 500.

⁵⁸² Ibid., 496.

⁵⁸³ Council.

strategy,⁵⁸⁴ and statements in the *Bundestag* have explicitly declared this as first and foremost *Germany's* policy.⁵⁸⁵ Accordingly, the parallels between German and E.U. policy appears less coincidental, and more indicative of Germany's noted position as both the central player, and lead architect of E.U. policy towards Iran.⁵⁸⁶ Although the E.U. desired to pursue foreign policy issues beyond the European realm, the specific manner in which dialogue with Iran emerged as a preeminent policy initiative by Europe, appears largely consistent with an "agenda-setting"⁵⁸⁷ approach by Germany towards the E.U. This interpretation is further bolstered, not only by Germany's emergence as the central advocate for developing and sustaining Iran relations –even when other E.U. states dissented–⁵⁸⁸ but in the prescription of an *Ostpolitik*-inspired strategy, which as noted earlier in this chapter, is conducive to Germany's subjective foreign policy interests towards Iran.

On this note, it is illuminating to consider that when German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher made a high-profile trip to Tehran in 1991, preceding the Edinburgh declaration, the event's narrative and implication was clear: multilateral backing or not, going forward, Germany aspired to develop relations with Iran according to this strategy.⁵⁸⁹ In this sense, Edinburgh merely served to upload and "embe[d] Germany's Iran policy in the EU's [...] Common Foreign and Security Policy",⁵⁹⁰ and given the allegedly European policy, from its inception, approximated Germany's previously articulated strategy towards Tehran, this fails, in and of itself, to evidence multilateral compromise or subservience by Berlin. Such behaviour, however, similarly does not refute civilian power interest as a multilateral and cooperative actor vis-à-vis Europe in this case. As Phillip Gordon argues, "if Germany is to remain a civilian power, it will have to convince others to be 'more like Germany' and to convince them that compromise, multilateralism and civilian solutions are always best."⁵⁹¹ Bearing this in mind, convincing Europe to approximate its position could, in fact, serve to affirm a civilian power commitment. Accordingly, for purposes of assessing the extent to

⁵⁸⁴ Adebahr, 44.

⁵⁸⁵ Die Bundesregierung, "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Drucksache 13/3483," (Berlin 1996), 6.

⁵⁸⁶ Reissner, 36.; Perthes, 11.; Reissner, 48.

⁵⁸⁷ Bulmer and Paterson, "Germany and the European Union: From 'Tamed Power' to Normalized Power?," 1055.

⁵⁸⁸ Reissner, 48.; Perthes, 11.; Reissner, 36.

⁵⁸⁹ Mousavian, 24-25.

⁵⁹⁰ Reissner, 48.

⁵⁹¹ Maull and Gordon.

which multilateral assumptions of a civilian power Germany are apparent in this case, this in turn, necessitates considering a fundamental question: to what extent do shared policy positions between Germany and Europe towards Iran, factually evidence any German convergences with Europe, as opposed to a mere European convergence upon Germany's subjective policy interests?

3.3.4 Leveraging Cooperation

In regard to this question, amidst E.U. backing for Germany's foreign policy approach towards Iran, it is of little surprise that following Edinburgh, a myriad of cooperative efforts between Germany and other E.U. members occurred. When the U.S. attempted to implement sanctions against German firms in accordance with the ILSA, Germany's reliance upon a unified European position was instrumental to the continuation of its policy, by having the European Union collectively declare such acts extraterritorial and illegal.⁵⁹² Critically, however, central to European opposition on this matter, were narratives emergent from German members of the European Parliament (EP), including Peter Kittelmann –a member of the German Christian Democratic Union (CDU)– who actively sought “to enlist the support” of the E.U.'s robust institutional mechanisms, and proclaimed that any hesitation would call into question the E.U.'s ability to act in the face of U.S. pressure.⁵⁹³ Given the E.U. was determined to establish itself as a capable actor, the characterisation was compelling. The E.U. chose to present a united front with Germany in this case, and the European Commission prepared to sue the U.S. over proposed sanctions.⁵⁹⁴ As in all litigation, presenting a unified front through class action tends to pose a more formidable claim, and unity and collaboration bore fruit for Berlin, resulting in a legal settlement between the U.S. and E.U. members concerning the issue of sanctions. In other words, collaboration both occurred, and facilitated resolution of Germany's subjective interests. This makes the issue more challenging, as beneficial foreign policy outcomes for Germany regarding Iran in a multilateral format, not only insufficiently establishes multilateralism as a shaper of Germany's approach, but may even evidence a profoundly self-serving, and unilateral disposition.

⁵⁹² Struwe, 34-35.

⁵⁹³ Mousavian, 72.

⁵⁹⁴ Pinto, 105.

In this manner, a key question is whether Germany's ability to leverage collaboration with E.U. members toward Iran, entails deliberate efforts to serve its personal interests. If so, this suggests a subservience of European policy to Germany's in the case of Iran, and this would in turn, lower confidence that German collaboration with the E.U. over Iran evidences a civilian power commitment to multilateralism and cooperation. On the other hand, confirming such a commitment, amidst the existence of inherent benefits for Germany, necessitates demonstrating Germany's position serves the benefit of multilateral and cooperative ends, rather than merely its own. Helpfully, in this regard, consideration of German and European positions regarding Iran's targeting of opposition figures in Europe, remains an illuminating case for addressing Germany's willingness to adjust its policy interests, and converge, for cooperative ends.

3.3.5 German and European Disunity Over Iran

Following Iran's Islamic Revolution of 1979, Iranian intelligence and security forces began targeting opposition figures in Europe.⁵⁹⁵ Although by the time of German unification, this behaviour was hardly a new phenomenon, the targeting of opposition figures markedly escalated around German unification, with over a dozen opposition figures assassinated in Europe between the latter part of the 1980s and 1990s.⁵⁹⁶ This issue was of significant transnational controversy for European states, and given a key legitimizing factor for a dialogue-based approach by the E.U., was that Iran appeared destined for "moderation" in its behaviour following the death of Iran's Supreme Leader Khomeini, and the ascendancy of Iranian President Rafsanjani,⁵⁹⁷ an escalation in Iran's targeting of opposition groups on European soil presented a crucial challenge for Europe's strategy. Moreover, Iranian security and intelligence officials were said to be using their embassy in Germany as a headquarters for these European operations, including the cross-border assassination of former Iranian Minister Reza Mazlouman in Paris.⁵⁹⁸ In this regard, such high-profile assassinations, transcending European borders, necessitated collaboration between Germany and other E.U.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid., 102-03.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁷ Reissner, 36.; Struwe, 15-16.

⁵⁹⁸ Lane, 81.; Mousavian, 91.

states. Yet, despite efforts by authorities from other E.U. countries to develop a unified approach with Germany, no collaborative enforcement mechanism emerged, and member states “ultimately chose to deal with the problem on a unilateral basis.”⁵⁹⁹ Of profound significance, key to this disunity, was not simply a determination on the part of coalition governments in Germany to avoid taking meaningful action against Iran and its intelligence officials –despite cognizance of alleged misdeeds– but a further willingness by Germany to engage in friendly bilateral talks with Iran’s top intelligence official at the time, who previously boasted of Iran’s targeting of opposition figures in Europe.⁶⁰⁰ Although the high-profile nature of Iranian opposition targeting engendered negative public opinion in Germany, and led critics of the coalition government to call for renewed efforts to crack down on Iran,⁶⁰¹ there was, nevertheless, no meaningful action taken at the time despite espousal of outrage.⁶⁰² The result was an emboldened Iran that markedly increased its targeting of opposition figures thereafter,⁶⁰³ while Germany’s coalition government continued to defend its bilateral basis of dialogue with Iranian intelligence officials.⁶⁰⁴ In this manner, optics aside, Germany’s behaviour on the matter evidenced a clear preference for sustaining its policy bilaterally, when presented with opportunities to instead, demonstrate solidarity with key European allies.

Particularly illustrative of this dynamic, in September 1992, two assassins stormed the Berlin restaurant *Mykonos*, killing four members of the Kurdistan Party of Iran (KDPI), including its exiled Secretary-General.⁶⁰⁵ Although some within German opposition parties were eager to capitalise upon the emerging controversy, leading a Social Democratic Party (SPD) member to even argue, “should Iran’s interference in the Mykonos murders be proven, political relations must end”,⁶⁰⁶ amazingly, the mainstream position, transcending party lines, underscored Germany’s determination to sustain a form of dialogue, despite the highly inflammatory nature of Iranian government culpability in assassinations on German soil. This position is captured well by a statement from Dieter Scheuer, a Green Party official, and

⁵⁹⁹ Pinto, 103.

⁶⁰⁰ Lane, 79-81.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid.

⁶⁰² Mousavian, 91.

⁶⁰³ Ibid., 221.

⁶⁰⁴ Lane, 79-81.

⁶⁰⁵ Mousavian, 94.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid., 105.

member of the opposition at the time, who noted, “no one wants the complete severance of diplomatic relations [...] reduc[ing] [relations] to a minimum [...] is necessary [simply] as a diplomatic gesture.”⁶⁰⁷ In other words, the mainstream German political reaction to a worst-case scenario of clear Iranian responsibility for assassinations on German soil, was one of symbolic protest, rather than meaningful reconsideration of a long-standing German policy approach.

Indeed, by 1997, not only had legal proceedings in Berlin established Iranian culpability, but the central figure of Germany’s bilateral discussions with Iranian intelligence officials, Ali Fallahian, was directly implicated, along with other senior Iranian officials.⁶⁰⁸ Following these revelations, and speaking on behalf of the E.U., the European Union President not only denounced Iran and its actions, but called for a suspension of the ministerial visits central to its dialogue-based approach, amidst wider questions regarding the viability of Europe’s Iran policy going forward.⁶⁰⁹ In this sense, the narrative at the supranational, European level, subtly, but surely, shifted towards questions regarding faith in the German-designed strategy towards Iran. The European Council’s rhetoric was harsh, leading to a conclusion that “there is no basis for the continuation of the Critical Dialogue between the European Union and Iran.”⁶¹⁰ Meanwhile, some of Germany’s E.U. partners explicitly questioned the efficacy of Germany’s strategy, with then Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini concluding *Mykonos* evidenced a dialogue-based policy towards Iran was a failure, and “proved not to be successful”.⁶¹¹

Insightfully, however, although then Iranian Ambassador to Germany, Seyyed Mousavian, argued that “when the court in Berlin pronounced its verdict, there followed the most serious disruption, which had ever taken place in relations between Iran and Germany”,⁶¹² in truth, evidence shows doubts about a dialogue-based policy, and relations with Iran, largely emerged from Germany’s European partners, rather than Germany’s coalition government or

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁸ Pinto, 105-07.; Mousavian, 109.

⁶⁰⁹ Pinto, 106.

⁶¹⁰ European Council, "Declaration by the European Union on Iran," news release, April 29, 1997, 1997, http://aei.pitt.edu/54075/1/CPR_967.pdf.

⁶¹¹ Struwe, 46.

⁶¹² Mousavian, 107.

opposition parties. Not only had the Kohl-led German government hoped that a reduction of ties would never occur, but when it became necessary to implement the symbolic reduction in ties following the court ruling, Germany nevertheless still conspicuously expressed a desire to maintain contact, albeit on a reduced level for the time being.⁶¹³ In stark contrast to the position of many of its European partners, Klaus Kinkel boldly proclaimed that notwithstanding setbacks, Germany's policy remained fundamentally sound, and any perceived aversion by Germany to continue referencing its "critical dialogue" was merely a matter of appeasing unnamed partners.⁶¹⁴ In this regard, and despite alluding to appeasement of European allies, Germany remained strikingly defiant towards E.U. doubts, and exhibited a clear determination to protect the legacy of its strategy, rather than contemplate a change of its approach for the benefit of European cooperation. Although Kinkel conceded to preferring unity on the subject of Iran, mainstream elites never voiced doubts about Germany's approach, choosing instead to mirror consensus amongst parties in Germany regarding the merits of dialogue and non-isolation.⁶¹⁵ The implication being: German and E.U. differences over Iran policy were not simply pronounced at times, they ultimately conveyed Germany's fundamental willingness to pursue its own interests vis-à-vis Iran, despite clear conflict with the interests expressed by core E.U. institutions and states.

This is a significant revelation, as existing accounts have often argued Germany's determination to temporarily reduce its relations with Tehran, implied a German reconsideration of its dialogue-based strategy.⁶¹⁶ As a result, among the greatest, albeit largely under-evaluated implications of the *Mykonos* case, were both an emergent intra-E.U. disagreement concerning the merits of sustaining Germany's strategy, and Germany's resulting incapacity and unwillingness to partake in reconsideration of its dialogue-based strategy, for the sake of cooperation. In doing so, Germany's unwillingness to reconsider its policy establishes that European cooperation and multilateralism toward Iran, remains subservient to interests underlying Germany's continuation of the approach.

⁶¹³ Pinto, 106.

⁶¹⁴ Struwe, 47.

⁶¹⁵ Pinto, 106.

⁶¹⁶ Mousavian, 113.; Struwe, 39-40.

3.3.6 European Solidarity with German Interest

As a consequence, suggestions of a German embracement of “European solidarity”,⁶¹⁷ following *Mykonos*, or a potential subservience of German interests to convergence and cooperation with Europe, seem largely inconsistent with behaviour. In this regard, of greatest importance, is the extent to which solidarity, if occurring, manifests itself largely by European convergence to the German position, rather than the other way around. In the end, it was ultimately Germany that won in its dispute with European partners, with a mere “symbolic package of measures” implemented,⁶¹⁸ and E.U. policy towards Iran once again approximated Germany’s subjective interests, under the title of “constructive dialogue”,⁶¹⁹ following Mohammad Khatami’s election as Iranian President.

Following the *Mykonos* ruling, Iran insisted Germany’s diplomatic mission be the last of the European states to return –ostensibly as punishment for allowing its judicially independent court to establish Iranian complicity.⁶²⁰ Revealingly, however, when faced with the prospect, the E.U. endeavoured to show its solidarity with Germany, by coordinating the return of its diplomatic missions, including a symbolic restoration of the French mission at the same time as Germany’s.⁶²¹ According to Dini, and despite his previous scepticism regarding Germany’s strategy, even the initial recall of E.U. diplomatic missions from Iran itself, was to be understood as “a sign of solidarity with Germany.”⁶²² Insightfully, this narrative and dynamic of ultimate European convergence with *Germany’s* Iran policy, following initial differences, appears to endure in the present era. Preceding the Trump administration’s withdrawal from the JCPOA, French President Emmanuel Macron was noted to initially assume a divergent position from Germany and other European allies, engendering fear of potential disunity over how to respond.⁶²³ Following discussions with Paris, however, Germany was able to see a position of unity emerge, in which explicit recognition of a “constructive dialogue” was cited as the key method for “bring[ing] about the end of destabilizing [Iranian] activities through

⁶¹⁷ Reissner, 34.

⁶¹⁸ Pinto, 106.

⁶¹⁹ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 177.; Bergenäs, 501-02.

⁶²⁰ Mousavian, 202.

⁶²¹ Ibid.

⁶²² Struwe, 40.

⁶²³ Laurence Norman, "Europe Strains to Keep United Front on Iran Deal," *The Wall Street Journal* 2017.

negotiated solutions.”⁶²⁴ In this sense, evidence throughout the post-unification time period of German foreign policy toward Iran, indicates an E.U., albeit lacking harmony with German policy at times, nevertheless consistently acquiescing towards Germany’s subjective position, and interests. In other words, when European solidarity towards Iran occurs, it manifests itself less in a German preoccupation with cooperation and multilateralism towards its European partners, and more in a European convergence with an uncompromising Germany, by which civilian power assumptions of cooperation and multilateralism as a central interest, or constraint of German behaviour towards Iran, is greatly challenged.

In this sense, one of the most intriguing legacies of “European” dialogue policies towards Iran, is the profoundly “bilateral” basis upon which relations take place, albeit “under the heading” of multilateral policy.⁶²⁵ Accordingly, although some have depicted dialogue as a paragon of European collaboration, and a fundamentally “multilateral policy”,⁶²⁶ official numbers imply otherwise, with Germany involved in over 300 official visits of a bilateral nature with their Iranian counterparts between 1990 and 1996.⁶²⁷ Whether E.U. dialogue was truly consistent with the spirit of Edinburgh or not, dialogue for Germany was undeniably occurring at a profoundly bilateral level. This, in turn, was ultimately cited as a key shortcoming of multilateral efforts, as the inability of Germany and its E.U. parties to converge at critical junctures, meant “national interests” stymied collective progress.⁶²⁸ But if Germany’s interests exist beyond European cooperation and multilateralism, why even advocate collective policy towards Iran in the first place?

One compelling explanation emerges from Germany’s domestic landscape at the time. When dialogue was initially being implemented, public opinion regarding Iran relations appeared divided. On the one hand, there existed relative consistency in German political discourse that dialogue represented the mechanism needed to induce political moderation and change in Iran.⁶²⁹ Conversely, outside the political class, despite public acceptance of an *Ostpolitik*-inspired policy, many feared Germany’s approach was overly lenient towards an authoritarian

⁶²⁴ "Merkel, Macron Und May Schmieden Anti-Trump-Allianz."

⁶²⁵ Struwe, 23.

⁶²⁶ Ibid., 39.

⁶²⁷ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 170.

⁶²⁸ Struwe, 39.

⁶²⁹ Perthes, 12.; Mousavian, 105-06.

regime, and perhaps insufficient for inducing change in this particular case.⁶³⁰ The narrative appearing throughout German media frequently called for a revision of Germany's policy, and the SPD and Green opposition –despite advocating some semblance of dialogue– espoused a rhetoric at times, highly critical of Kohl's policy during the 1990s.⁶³¹ As a result, amidst very real concern over the viability of a policy facing scepticism at the public level, Kinkel and others made a case that its policy toward Iran was not only Germany's own *Nichtausgrenzung* approach in action, but critically as such, a policy commanding “strong support of all fifteen foreign ministers of the European Union.”⁶³² At the time of dialogue, debates within the *Bundestag* demonstrated undeniable consensus regarding “supranational European identity,”⁶³³ and the merits of maintaining consensus and cooperation with Europe.⁶³⁴ In this manner, by portraying dialogue with Iran as a policy garnering unanimous support of European partners, German elites were capable of drawing parallels between its subjective policy efforts, and conformity with domestic expectations of cooperation and multilateralism vis-à-vis European partners. Since leveraging identity through invocation of historical memory “in public settings”, is recognised as being conducive to the legitimation and “support of particular policies in the present”,⁶³⁵ an ability to frame dialogue as an affirmation of civilian power expectations, was therefore a compelling narrative. Bearing such logic in mind, whether a genuine interest or not, establishing parallels between Germany's civilian power identity, and Iran relations, served the interest of elite policymakers.

Although it is impossible to establish unequivocally that elites consciously intended to leverage a civilian power identity to legitimise the relationship, it is clear that European cooperation in name, entailed tangible benefits for Germany, where occurring. Accordingly, and most importantly in this regard: participation in “European” policy efforts towards Iran, does not itself offer any evidence that Germany's foreign policy towards Iran was attributable to civilian power interests of multilateralism and cooperation with Europe. In fact, on the contrary, analysis of narratives concerning this theme upgrades confidence that it was not a

⁶³⁰ Perthes, 12.

⁶³¹ Reissner, 40-41.

⁶³² Ibid.

⁶³³ Banchoff, "German Identity and European Integration," 272.

⁶³⁴ Hellmann, "Goodbye Bismarck? The Foreign Policy of Contemporary Germany," 24.; Goetz, 31.

⁶³⁵ Banchoff, "Historical Memory and German Foreign Policy: The Cases of Adenauer and Brandt," 38.

tangible influence upon its policy interests. In other words, consistent with the transatlantic aspect of Germany's cooperative and multilateral disposition in Iran policy, the European aspect similarly evidences a German determination to defiantly pursue its own policy, and to seek multilateral cooperation towards Iran, only when beneficial to its subjective interests.

3.4 Germany's 'Special' Relations with Israel and the Challenge of Iran

Having downgraded confidence in both the transatlantic, as well as European, multilateral and cooperative relationships as explanations of Germany's foreign policy towards Iran, it would appear expectations of a civilian power Germany, in this regard, are greatly challenged by its determination to pursue interests beyond the scope of cooperation. Nevertheless, in her historic 2008 speech before the *Knesset*, German Chancellor Angela Merkel spoke of an undeniable linkage between Germany and Israel, rooted in collective memory of the Holocaust.⁶³⁶ Citing a "responsibility" on the part of Germany concerning relations with Israel,⁶³⁷ Merkel's remarks captured well the ostensible influence of historical and collective memories upon present-day German identity and foreign policy interest,⁶³⁸ which supposedly result in a cooperative German actor, committed to a process of *reconciliation* with Israel.⁶³⁹ According to German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier: "with no other country are we linked so inseparably through our history",⁶⁴⁰ and this inseparability, leads to a particularly "special", and "unique" relationship.⁶⁴¹ Israel accordingly factors prominently within official German reports addressing its Middle East regional policy, which not only reference a perceived "moral responsibility" towards Israel as a nation of "special meaning",⁶⁴² but also

⁶³⁶ Angela Merkel, "German Chancellor Address of the Israeli Knesset," (C-SPAN, 2008).; Ruth Wittlinger, "The Merkel Government's Politics of the Past," *German politics and society*. 26, no. 4 (2008): 14.

⁶³⁷ "The Merkel Government's Politics of the Past," 14.

⁶³⁸ Ibid., 13.; Steinberg, 5.; Welch and Wittlinger, 39.; Wittlinger, "The Merkel Government's Politics of the Past," 9.

⁶³⁹ Lily Gardner Feldman, *Germany's Foreign Policy of Reconciliation: From Enmity to Amity* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012).; "The Principle and Practice of 'Reconciliation' in German Foreign Policy: Relations with France, Israel, Poland and the Czech Republic," *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 75, no. 2 (1999): 333-56.

⁶⁴⁰ Wittlinger, "The Merkel Government's Politics of the Past," 13.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid.

⁶⁴² Bundestag, "Die Nahostpolitik Deutschlands Und Russlands Seit 1991," 7.

explicitly articulate “solidarity with Israel” as Germany’s preeminent interest in the region.⁶⁴³ In this regard, despite challenges to Germany’s other cooperative relationships in its foreign policy towards Iran, one would not only anticipate Germany’s relationship with Israel to have a particular influence upon its Iran policy, but also, expect Germany to prioritise relations with Israel, over those with Iran. This means intersections between the two are instrumental for addressing whether cooperation and solidarity with key partners functions as an explanation of Germany’s foreign policy towards Iran, in accordance with the expectations of a civilian power Germany. However, considering Germany’s foreign policy toward Iran was evidenced to fundamentally challenge many civilian power expectations of cooperation and multilateralism: to what extent does Germany’s unique and special relationship with Israel appear to meaningfully shape its foreign policy towards Iran?

3.4.1 A Conflict of Interests

To address this question, it is firstly essential to understand that Iran’s foreign policy position regarding Israel –as characterised by Tehran’s former Ambassador to Germany– entails “rejecting Israel’s right to exist, and [...] oppos[ing] [...] the peace process”,⁶⁴⁴ by which, for Israel, Iran in turn, represents “its most formidable enemy and an existential threat.”⁶⁴⁵ These foreign policy positions of the two countries have accordingly factored prominently into their respective relationships with Germany since unification, leading prominent media accounts in the post-unification era to characterise Germany’s relationship with Iran as a key “point of difference between Germany” and Israel.⁶⁴⁶ However, despite unease from the Israeli side, it is insightful to note that Iranian officials directly involved in relations with Germany, have conversely claimed Germany’s foreign policy exhibits favouritism towards Israel.⁶⁴⁷ In this manner, Germany’s desire to pursue relations with both states –amidst the conflictual nature of Israeli and Iranian foreign policy positions– has appeared highly problematic for Germany, and led both countries to voice objections, as well as decry favouritism on the part of Berlin.

⁶⁴³ Ibid., 4.

⁶⁴⁴ Mousavian, 4.

⁶⁴⁵ Paul Belkin, "Germany's Relations with Israel: Background and Implications for German Middle East Policy" (2007), 13.; Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 210.

⁶⁴⁶ Mousavian, 4.; "Halbwahr-Heiten Und Drohgebärden," *Der Spiegel* 2017.

⁶⁴⁷ Mousavian, 4.

Notwithstanding Israel's preoccupation with German foreign policy towards Iran, it is vital to note that in the early years of unification, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and other key policymakers in Tel Aviv, expressed optimism that Germany might positively influence Iran through its relationship, and potentially mitigate Iranian obstructions to the Middle East peace process.⁶⁴⁸ Given the Berlin Republic exhibited an unambiguous "consensus" regarding support for "Israel's security and right to exist", and Israeli policymakers were cognizant that "across all the parties represented in the Bundestag Israel's interests and security are clearly favoured",⁶⁴⁹ Israel appeared less concerned about Germany's implementation of a dialogue approach towards Iran. In this sense, it appears there were assumptions that Germany's civilian power commitment to cooperation, and the appearance of unanimous support for Israel by German policymakers, would in turn, shape Germany's policy towards Tehran. In fact, there were prominent indications during the early, post-unification years, that Israel placed a great deal of trust in Germany's overtures toward Iran, including its possible mediation over Ron Arad –an Israeli pilot believed to be held by Hezbollah in Lebanon at the time.⁶⁵⁰ However, the initial trust and optimism held by Israel was quickly supplanted with profound suspicion, following prominent accounts in the German media, which publicised Berlin's role in the clandestine talks over Arad.⁶⁵¹ To some in Israel, the leaking of the story appeared tied to the coalition government, and Israeli policymakers accordingly accused Berlin of leaking it to advance and legitimise German interests in relations with Iran, at the expense of Israel.⁶⁵² In the eyes of Israeli policymakers, the implication was clear: "[Germany] definitely exploited the fact [...] to explain away the intimate relationship they are developing with Iran".⁶⁵³

The setback in Arad negotiations, notwithstanding, key instances of collaboration and mediation between Berlin and Tel Aviv regarding Iran and its regional affiliates transpired. This included Germany's 2006 deployment of naval forces off Lebanon as part of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), its continued efforts in support of the Middle

⁶⁴⁸ Lane, 87.

⁶⁴⁹ Muriel Asseburg, "The Arab-Israeli Conflict," in *German Middle East and North Africa Policy*, ed. Guido Steinberg (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik 2009), 23.

⁶⁵⁰ Lane, 87.

⁶⁵¹ Ibid., 87-88.

⁶⁵² Ibid.; Mousavian, 67.

⁶⁵³ Lane, 87-88.

East peace process,⁶⁵⁴ and a 2008 exchange of prisoners and remains between Israel and Hezbollah.⁶⁵⁵ Despite such continued collaboration, however, the narrative had undoubtedly shifted away from the initial one of trust and confidence in Germany's commitment to cooperation with Israel, towards one underscoring Israeli suspicion of Germany's relations with Iran. In exemplification of this shift, Israeli officials, such as former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, increasingly invoked narratives to remind Germany of its "moral obligation to confront Iran", while concurrently denouncing "German government support" for the trade and commercial interests seemingly apparent in German foreign policy toward Iran.⁶⁵⁶ In doing so, the manner in which Israeli policymakers drew attention to a German identity predicated upon close cooperation with Israel, in parallel to its criticism of Germany's policy with Iran, served to underscore a strong belief on its part, that Berlin's behaviour remained inconsistent with the essence of this identity, and related interest. Israeli efforts to encourage German reconsideration of its Iran relations notwithstanding, German policy exhibited relative consistency, perpetuating Israeli distrust of Germany's policy towards Iran into the present.⁶⁵⁷ But although Israel has inferred an explanation of Germany's relationship with Iran that exists beyond the scope of cooperation with Israel, to what extent might evidence indicate otherwise?

3.4.2 Narratives of Solidarity

In regard to this question, it is revealing to consider that within the context of its relationship with Iran, Germany has never wavered in its espousal of support for Israel and its right to exist. When former Iranian President Ahmadinejad called for the destruction of Israel in October 2005, the German response was swift and supportive of Israel, leading a member of the CDU to go so far as to proclaim: "a country that wants to destroy Israel cannot be a partner for Germany."⁶⁵⁸ Comments supportive of Israel, in the face of disparaging remarks from the Iranian side, have transcended party lines, leading former SPD leader, and former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sigmar Gabriel, as well as CDU politician Norbert Lammert, to

⁶⁵⁴ Belkin, 10-12.

⁶⁵⁵ Asseburg, 26.

⁶⁵⁶ Belkin, 13.

⁶⁵⁷ "Halbwahr-Heiten Und Drohgebärden."

⁶⁵⁸ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll " (2005).; Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 193.

emphasise in the context of Germany's relations with Iran, that "the existential right of Israel is non-negotiable."⁶⁵⁹ Moreover, and of critical importance for purposes of determining whether Germany's commitment to cooperation with Israel can explain its policy toward Iran, the record further implies, at times, a contingency of relations with Iran, upon recognition and respect of Israel. In exemplification of this, at an inaugural meeting between Iranian and German parliamentary groups following the JCPOA, it was stated by German officials that despite optimism for a "new beginning", Holocaust denial and threats against Israel constitute a "red line" for Germany.⁶⁶⁰ This position was further reiterated by Sigmar Gabriel, who captured the centrality of the Israeli theme in ongoing talks with Iran, by stating: "normal and friendly relations [between Germany and Iran] will only be possible if Iran accepts the existential right of Israel".⁶⁶¹ Critically, that policy position definitively strained Germany's relations with Iran at the time, and resulted in a high-profile snub by senior Iranian officials, including Speaker of the Iranian *Majles*, Ali Larijani, during Gabriel's subsequent visit to Iran.⁶⁶² In this sense, the narrative of post-unification German foreign policy towards Iran appears largely indicative of unabashed German support for Israel, in which Berlin's determination to affirm its support for Israel's right to exist, has even at times, strained its wider relationship with Tehran. Nevertheless, despite relative consistency in *words*, and an effect, do *deeds* by Germany evidence a real contingency of relations upon recognition and respect of Israel?

3.4.3 Words and Deeds

Speaking before the *Knesset*, Merkel noted her belief that historical and collective memories concerning the *Shoah* and Israel, must extend beyond a mere remembrance, and serve to tangibly shape the direction Germany's foreign policy.⁶⁶³ In this sense, for Merkel, and consistent with civilian power expectations, a genuine pertinence of collective memory in

⁶⁵⁹ Deutscher Bundestag, "Lammert: Existenzrecht Israels Auch Basis Der Beziehungen Zu Iran," news release, März 07 2017, <http://www.bundestag.de/presse/pressemittelungen/2017/pm-170307-israel/496410>.; Roland Nelles and Florian Gathmann, "Gabriel Will Mit Iran Über Syrienkrieg Sprechen," *Spiegel Online*, September 30, 2016.

⁶⁶⁰ Deutscher Bundestag, "Iranische Abgeordnete Im Bundestag: Signal Des Neubeginns," (Berlin2017).

⁶⁶¹ Nelles and Gathmann.

⁶⁶² Sven Böll, "Eklat Bei Gabriels Iranreise: Dann Eben Ins Museum," *ibid.*, Oktober 04, 2016.

⁶⁶³ Wittlinger, "The Merkel Government's Politics of the Past," 19.

Germany's foreign policy identity, dictates "thoughts must become words, and words must become deeds."⁶⁶⁴ That is to say, a mere invocation of narratives does not appear to sufficiently establish confidence that Germany's commitment to cooperation with Israel meaningfully shapes German policy towards Iran. Bearing Merkel's remarks in mind, true determination of this identity's influence upon Germany's relations with Iran necessitates establishing its actions are consistent with its rhetoric. But what do its actions indicate?

To address this, it is helpful to begin by considering Germany's reaction vis-à-vis Iran, to both the 1995 assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Rabin –himself a critic of German relations with Iran– and Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani's characterisation of his death as a "divine punishment."⁶⁶⁵ The inflammatory nature of Rafsanjani's comments, coinciding with Iranian Foreign Minister Velayati's scheduled visit to Germany, engendered profound controversy within Germany, and provoked scrutiny of Germany's relationship with Iran in the *Bundestag*.⁶⁶⁶ Concern over the matter led to an "emergency meeting" among high-level German officials on the subject, and opposition groups sought to have Velayati's invitation rescinded following Rafsanjani's remarks.⁶⁶⁷ Revealingly, however, although a subsequent *Bundestag* vote revoked the invitation, rather than embrace the symbolic rescindment, Kohl and Kinkel instead chastised the opposition in a closed-door meeting for endangering "the government's carefully planned long-term policy on Iran".⁶⁶⁸ For Kinkel, allowing "emotional" reactions to risk damaging the coalition's Iran policy was "a differ[ing] opinion".⁶⁶⁹ Consequently, when presented with a clear opportunity for Germany to demonstrate support for Israel in its relationship with Iran, Germany's elite policymakers instead characterised the largely symbolic deed of affirming Germany's support for Israel as an "emotional" and imprudent course of action, inconsistent with the underlying interests of their policy. In this regard, one of the most prominent examples of debate within the *Bundestag* concerning Germany's relationship with Iran, and its impact upon cooperation with Israel, resulted in a clear indication that Germany's long-term policy interests vis-à-vis Iran,

⁶⁶⁴ Merkel.

⁶⁶⁵ Mousavian, 78.

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid., 78-79.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁹ "Defeat of Coalition Parties in the Federal Parliament—Conference on Islam with Participation of Velayati Cancelled," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, November 11, 1995 1995.

exist largely beyond the realm of affirming support for Israel, despite the espousal of such an interest.

Following Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's election as Iranian President in 2005, anti-Semitic remarks and Holocaust denial became standard comments from the Iranian President.⁶⁷⁰

With Ahmadinejad repeatedly flaunting Germany's ostensible "red line" issue of Israel, such behaviour again represented a prime opportunity for determining if deeds followed words.

Merkel's response to Ahmadinejad's initial comments was largely consistent with expectations, and resulted in a strong letter of protest, as well as the summoning of Iran's Ambassador.⁶⁷¹ Speaking at the Munich Security Conference the following February, Merkel expanded upon her outrage, and made clear that: "a president who questions Israel's right to exist, a president who denies the holocaust cannot expect Germany to show any tolerance at all on this issue. We have learned the lessons of our past."⁶⁷² Nevertheless, despite the strong rhetoric directed at Ahmadinejad, the fallout from his remarks produced an even more subdued response policy wise, than witnessed during the "Black Friday" vote over Velayati's invitation in 1995.⁶⁷³ Naturally, the *Bundestag* voiced its support for Israel, and once again emphasised Israel's right to exist in no uncertain terms, but analysis of Germany's *actions* highlight a curious determination to maintain its policy of dialogue,⁶⁷⁴ much as Germany did at the expense of its other multilateral and cooperative relationships. But what appears to account for this German tendency to prioritise through *actions*, its approach in relations with Iran, over wholehearted solidarity with Israel?

Interestingly, on this note, analysis of narratives addressing German-Israeli intersections with Iran policy, offers a potential rationale for such behaviour: concern over potential Israeli use of force against Iran. Although preventing use of force is one of the civilian power role concept's four facets as envisaged in this thesis,⁶⁷⁵ and will accordingly be addressed in-depth

⁶⁷⁰ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 195.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid., 196.

⁶⁷² Angela Merkel, "Speech by German Chancellor at Munich Security Conference" (paper presented at the Munich Security Conference, Munich, February 4 2006).; Wittlinger, "The Merkel Government's Politics of the Past," 19.

⁶⁷³ Mousavian, 79.

⁶⁷⁴ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 196-97.

⁶⁷⁵ Refer to chapter two. Maull.; Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?."; Harnisch and Maull.; Maull, "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power'?."

in chapter six, it is nevertheless critical to appreciate the facet features prominently in reference to Israeli intersections with Germany's foreign policy toward Iran. Merkel for her part, has stated threats against Israel constitute "a threat to us",⁶⁷⁶ implying not only that Iranian military action against Israel would constitute a point of German intervention, but also, that concern over use of force is not, in fact, an ultimate limitation to Germany's support, provided that it occurs for defensive purposes.⁶⁷⁷ To this point, for some, Germany's support of Israel with UNIFIL did serve to corroborate a German commitment to cooperation with Israel, even in a military context.⁶⁷⁸ However, German support for Israel in the context of its defence against imminent Iranian military threats, appears to be an entirely different matter from support for Israel that might precipitate a non-defensive strike against Iran, or collapse of dialogue. In illustration of this distinction, it is noted that for Germany, a surprising willingness at certain times to support multilateral sanctions against Iran in support of Israel as well as others,⁶⁷⁹ is explained by its determination to "impose as few sanctions as possible but as many as are strictly necessary to [...] avoid an Israeli military attack".⁶⁸⁰ This sense that preventing use of force against Iran is of greater interest for Germany than supporting Israel is similarly underscored in a prominent *Wall Street Journal* article, in which a "senior German politician" chose to characterise use of force against Iran as: "the worst of all scenarios –worse, even, than nuclear weapons in the hands of a regime that denies the Holocaust and threatens to launch another holocaust against Israel."⁶⁸¹

In other words, despite a perception that support for Israel does occur through German actions, it would appear the calculus behind such occasional convergences, may be attributable to wider, non-cooperative interests underlying Iran relations, be them a civilian power-based interest in preventing use of force, or a rationalist and materialist calculation to sustain long-term trade interests through preservation of ties. Needless to say, it is too early to establish confidence in Germany's underlying interests, and explain the relationship with

⁶⁷⁶ Wittlinger, "The Merkel Government's Politics of the Past," 19.

⁶⁷⁷ Alex Pearson, "Angela Merkel: Israel Has 'Right' to Defend Itself against Iran in Syria," *Deutsche Welle*, January 28 2019.

⁶⁷⁸ Asseburg, 23.

⁶⁷⁹ Belkin, 13.

⁶⁸⁰ Küntzel, "Germany and a Nuclear Iran," 52.

⁶⁸¹ Yossi Klein Halevi, "Iran's German Enablers," *The Wall Street Journal* September 24, 2007 2007.

Iran. Regardless, though, what does appear clear from analysis of Germany's actions in this context, and remains critical for purposes of determining Germany's expected commitment to Israel as a civilian power in its relations with Iran, is that Germany's interests exist beyond the scope of cooperation with Israel. When facing a perceived dilemma of interests, in which Germany feels it must choose between unwavering support for Israel, and potential use of force against Iran, the Israeli identity appears subservient, and there is no evidence to suggest Germany adapts its strategy for any reason other than to advance its subjective interests with Iran. As a consequence, in regard to whether espoused words translate into tangible deeds for Germany, it would appear confidence in cooperation with Israel is downgraded, albeit the strongest and most compelling of cooperative relationships for Germany in the case of its foreign policy toward Iran. Although Germany clearly maintains a strong bond with Israel, analysis of this aspect of multilateralism and cooperation demonstrates notable limitations to its applicability in the context of Iran policy, and in turn, this evidences a subservience of support for Israel, to other interests in Germany's relationship with Iran.

Conclusion

In the context of German foreign policy toward Iran, analysis of three key aspects of Germany's ostensible civilian power commitment to cooperation and multilateralism, provide critical insights into Berlin's relationship with Tehran. Notwithstanding widespread acceptance that Germany's core, transatlantic, European, and Israeli relationships have shaped German identity, and in turn, encouraged its avoidance of unilateral interests in foreign policy, Germany's relationship with Iran presents critical challenges to this prevailing understanding. Although instances of cooperation and multilateralism do, in fact, occur between Germany and these parties regarding Iran, evidence demonstrates a low degree of confidence in this facet of the civilian power role concept, as an explanation of Germany's policy approach towards Iran.

After establishing the manner in which a civilian power Germany was expected to demonstrate cooperative, and multilateral tendencies in its foreign policy toward Iran, the chapter began by considering transatlantic intersections with the relationship. In doing so,

this chapter evidenced that German foreign policy toward Iran was largely formulated in direct opposition to the strategy set forth by Washington, preceding President Obama's 2008 election, and following the election of President Trump. In this manner, the chapter not only showed how consideration of the differences between the two approaches serves to accentuate, and define Germany's strategy, but also how this tendency to pursue its own approach, evidences an assertive Germany, driven more by its subjective interests in foreign policy, than by an interest to affirm transatlantic cooperation. In demonstrating this, the chapter critically established that contrary to prevailing characterisations and understandings—which posit Schröder's unwillingness to support the U.S. invasion of Iraq represents the initial instance of post-war German dissent vis-à-vis the transatlantic relationship—German foreign policy towards Iran, in fact, constitutes the first instance of post-unification German foreign policy defiance of Washington.

Having noted the existence of a quintessentially German approach towards Iran, as well as a capacity to assertively pursue this, the chapter turned to consideration of Germany's cooperation and multilateralism with Europe. In addressing this aspect of Germany's ostensible commitment to multilateral policy towards Iran, the chapter showed that although Germany indeed chose to collaborate with European partners on foreign policy toward Iran, the approach was undeniably shaped by Germany's interests, and remained consistent with the articulated policy aspirations of Berlin preceding multilateral initiatives in Edinburgh. Moreover, the manner in which Germany demonstrated a clear preference for sustaining its approach, rather than converge with its European partners at critical junctures, bespoke interests for Germany in relations with Iran well beyond the scope of cooperation with E.U. partners. Accordingly, this not only downgrades confidence that an affinity for European cooperation meaningfully shapes, or explains German policy towards Iran, but it further serves to reaffirm the necessity of considering the supposedly "European" relationship, from a German perspective.

Lastly, the chapter indicated that Germany's determination to affirm its special relationship with Israel appears to constitute the strongest aspect of Germany's civilian power identity as a cooperative actor in relations with Tehran. Despite a propensity for Germany's support of Israel to, at times, problematize its relations with Iran, Germany has nevertheless expressed

unwavering and unabashed support for Israel's right to exist. In this manner, of all relationships said to shape Germany as a cooperative foreign policy actor, evidence shows the Israeli facet thereof, has the greatest impact upon Germany's relations with Iran. Nevertheless, it is imperative to recognise the extent to which affirming support for Israel has manifested itself in German policy towards Iran, appears largely restricted to rhetorical support, with tangible instances of policy action conspicuously lacking. In fact, there are numerous instances in which Germany's policy approach endured, despite Iran espousing rhetoric towards Israel that challenges Berlin's ostensible "red line". In this respect, although relations with Israel have definitively shaped Germany's rhetoric in Iran policy, meaningful policy action by Germany to such ends is not apparent. As noted, German concern over potential use of force against Iran by Israel, remains an omnipresent concern for Berlin. And in evidencing that an underlying interest in preventing use of force –for reasons yet to be established– is considered more important than affirming unwavering support for Israel's actions in the region, the chapter accordingly evidenced German policy interests towards Iran, beyond the explanatory capacity of this relationship as well.

Considering the totality of these findings, although a commitment to cooperation and multilateralism remains an intrinsic feature of the civilian power role concept, German foreign policy towards Iran appears to challenge these fundamental assumptions, and related foreign policy expectations. In this case, Germany's behaviour evidences a state not only largely driven by unilateral interests of maintaining dialogue, and non-exclusion, but doing so at the expense of espoused multilateral and cooperative interests. However, considering the chapter evidenced Germany's determination to pursue its own approach may, in fact, evidence a commitment to other civilian power interests, this leads one to ponder: to what extent may other facets of the civilian power role concept explain these unilateral tendencies? To answer this question, it is essential to turn consideration towards other facets of the role concept.

Chapter Four: Human Rights, Rule of Law, and Democratisation in German Foreign Policy Toward Iran

Introduction

In chapter three, analysis demonstrated prevailing assumptions of multilateralism and cooperation for a civilian power Germany, fail to explain Berlin's post-unification relationship with Iran. In evidencing a capacity for Germany to behave contrary to the expectations of a civilian power, the preceding chapter further highlighted the particular importance of considering the extent to which Germany's behaviour in this case, may challenge other facets of the civilian power role concept as well. Preeminent among these of course, is Germany's ostensible commitment to the advancement of human rights, rule of law and democracy.

Although Germany is obligated to consider human rights, rule of law and the advancement of democratic values in foreign policy,⁶⁸² there is nevertheless an understanding that such normative considerations remain intrinsic to Germany's post-unification identity as a civilian power, based upon memory of its National Socialist past.⁶⁸³ This, in turn, supposedly produced a determination to "never again" allow a subversion of human rights, and further encouraged active promotion of such interests through its foreign policy initiatives.⁶⁸⁴ In this manner, it is unsurprising to recognise that such considerations feature prominently throughout the narrative of post-unification German foreign policy towards Iran as well.

Whether it be the emergence of Germany's contemporary relationship with Iran from bilateral "human rights seminars",⁶⁸⁵ or Sigmar Gabriel's comments that an inherent "moralistic" aspect of present-day "dialogue" emphasises "human rights",⁶⁸⁶ a clear reference to human rights, rule of law, and democratisation has occurred throughout Germany's dialogues and engagements with Iran. This has led observers to infer a preeminent focus upon such themes within the relationship, and Iran is accordingly cited as "the only Gulf country with which a bilateral

⁶⁸² Struwe, 10-11.; Deutscher Bundestag, "Grundgesetz Für Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland," (2017).

⁶⁸³ Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 56.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid., 56-66.

⁶⁸⁵ Adebahr, 44.; Struwe, 15.

⁶⁸⁶ Nelles and Gathmann.

human-rights dialogue has been conducted” by the Berlin Republic.⁶⁸⁷ In this manner, notwithstanding contentions that Germany may at times, only pay lip service to human rights in the Middle East and North African (MENA) region,⁶⁸⁸ its relations with Iran figure prominently in accounts proposing Germany’s foreign policy efforts underscore a genuine determination to advance and prioritise human rights.⁶⁸⁹ In fact, some consider human rights to constitute “one of the most fundamental” aspects of Germany’s relationship with Iran,⁶⁹⁰ leading others to further explain Germany’s ardent determination to pursue dialogues and diplomatic engagement, as attributable to an underlying interest in improving human rights, and empowering “moderate” forces conducive to progress in these areas.⁶⁹¹ In this sense, given a nexus of advocacy for human rights, rule of law, and democracy is posited by many to constitute a preeminent interest of, or leading impetus for, Germany’s relationship with Iran,⁶⁹² it would appear such interpretations validate many prevailing assumptions of a civilian power Germany in this case.

Yet, although one school of thought attributes Germany’s interest in relations with Iran to these considerations, another has countered German foreign policy towards Iran, in fact, demonstrates a striking marginalisation of human rights, with “one of the greatest criticisms [...] of” Germany’s strategy being a lack of tangible progress in this area.⁶⁹³ Considering some interpret “trade and investments”⁶⁹⁴ as a more substantive area of development in Germany’s successive dialogues and diplomatic engagements, some critics postulate Iran is merely “a market worth selling their souls for”.⁶⁹⁵ This is to say, for others, a lack of discernible improvement in the areas of human rights, rule of law and democratisation, in parallel with robust commercial and trade engagement by Germany, bespeaks prioritisation of

⁶⁸⁷ Perthes, 12.

⁶⁸⁸ Isabelle Werenfels, "Maghreb," in *German Middle East and North Africa Policy*, ed. Guido Steinberg (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik 2009), 10.

⁶⁸⁹ Quille and Keane, 97.; Struwe.; Kaussler, "European Union Constructive Engagement with Iran (2000–2004): An Exercise in Conditional Human Rights Diplomacy."

⁶⁹⁰ Mousavian, 4.

⁶⁹¹ Struwe, 3-4.

⁶⁹² Kaussler, "European Union Constructive Engagement with Iran (2000–2004): An Exercise in Conditional Human Rights Diplomacy."; Mousavian, 191.; Struwe.

⁶⁹³ Reissner, 37.

⁶⁹⁴ Bergenäs, 502.;

⁶⁹⁵ Struwe, 29.

“pragmatic” or “economic” interests,⁶⁹⁶ and as such, evidences patent disregard for normative interests of a civilian power.⁶⁹⁷

However, implicit in this argument’s logic, is a question concerning whether a lack of progress in human rights, rule of law, and democratisation, is indeed synonymous with German disinterest in such issues. On the one hand, a deliberate marginalisation of such interests would undoubtedly serve to problematize many assumptions of a civilian power Germany, as well as downgrade confidence in this role concept as a potential explanation for Germany’s relationships with Iran. On the other hand, evidencing a Germany dedicated to human rights, rule of law, and democratisation in this case, albeit without meaningful progress in this area, would actually serve to upgrade confidence in prevailing understandings of post-unification Germany in its policy towards Iran. In this manner, different from existing analyses –which often question Germany’s interest in normative concerns towards Iran due to a lack of identifiable progress in the area–⁶⁹⁸ this thesis instead holds evidencing a sincere commitment by Germany to these assumptions in its policy, is more crucial than measuring induced change in Iranian human rights, rule of law, and democratisation. In other words, even though substantive change in Iran did not actually occur through the relationship: do Germany’s actions in this case, reflect the genuine interest of a civilian power to prioritise human rights, rule of law, and democratisation in its relationship with Iran?

With this in mind, the following chapter aims to address this overarching question, through analysis of discourse, as well as behaviour, to consider the extent to which human rights, rule of law, and democratisation, are in fact, evidenced as underlying interests, potentially capable of explaining Germany’s relationship with Iran. To accomplish this, the chapter firstly aims to establish how consideration of human rights, rule of law, and democratisation, emerged as key features, as well as premises, of post-unification German foreign policy, and identity as a civilian power. In doing so, the chapter will attempt to establish a baseline of expectations for a Germany conforming to civilian power expectations in this area. Following this, the chapter demonstrates the validity of these assumptions in a wider context of post-unification German

⁶⁹⁶ Pinto, 107.; Reissner.; Bergenäs.

⁶⁹⁷ Refer to chapters one and two.

⁶⁹⁸ Reissner.; Bergenäs.; Struwe.; Lane.; Pinto.

foreign policy. Once evidenced, the chapter will be able to effectively address Germany's engagement with Iran, and to consider the extent to which its behaviour confirms an underlying interest in this area. Ultimately, through analysis of policy documents, discourse, and secondary sources, this chapter shows that while human rights, rule of law, and democratisation indeed represent central themes of Germany's foreign policy towards Iran, a noted lack of progress in these areas extends beyond policy ineffectuality, and instead evidences conscious prioritisation of alternative interests, at the expense of key civilian power assumptions.

4.1 Human Rights, Rule of Law, and Premises of German Foreign Policy

Before addressing human rights, rule of law, and democratisation within Germany's foreign policy towards Iran, it is essential to establish how these interests are understood to comprise central components of Germany's foreign policy, and identity, as a civilian power. Given this chapter aims to consider whether the relationship may, in fact, challenge assumptions regarding these interests, establishing how such interests are expected to explain Germany's behaviour, remains a core premise for the analysis to follow.

In this regard, it is vital to appreciate that for post-unification Germany, consideration of human rights, rule of law, and democratic values, are all considered fundamental elements of its foreign relations. Whether it be the German Federal Constitutional Court's *Solange* ruling,⁶⁹⁹ or German *Basic Law*'s explicit requirements,⁷⁰⁰ wider German foreign policy confirms at least consideration of, if not full contingency upon, respect for human rights, rule of law, and democratic values in foreign policy. Bearing such precedent in mind, even preceding unification, Germany demonstrated a clear incorporation of human rights and rule of law, as central aspects of its foreign policy identity. In this sense, Germany's enshrinement of these considerations is of profound significance, as themes such as human rights are

⁶⁹⁹ The 1974 ruling made further European integration contingent upon an observed level of human rights and rule of law commensurate with that of Germany's. Harnisch, "The Politics of Domestication': A New Paradigm in German Foreign Policy: German Politics Lecture, International Association for the Study of German Politics (Iasgp), Birmingham 27 May 2009," 458-9.

⁷⁰⁰ Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 66.; Bundestag, "Grundgesetz Für Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland."

generally viewed as “ahistorical, even anti-historical”, and imply objective values, rather than reflect a state’s own identity and experience.⁷⁰¹ This means unlike most states, which may embrace norms of human rights, rule of law, and democracy independent of their subjective historical experiences or memories, Germany instead forged an identity committed to such values, because of its past.

Specifically, in this regard, the manifestation of Germany’s identity as such, emerged from Germany’s historical and collective memories concerning the period of National Socialism, leading them to embrace and advance a “‘never again’” disposition and approach to foreign policy.⁷⁰² This means consideration of human rights and rule of law, as well as seeking to promote “moralism and democracy”, have emerged as central pillars of German culture and identity, and in turn, ostensibly shaped its “foreign-policy role concept”⁷⁰³ as a civilian power. For civilian powers, the expectations are clear: not only is foreign policy assumed to be “value-based”, but “the promotion and realisation of [...] human rights has to be one of the most important aims”.⁷⁰⁴ Not only does this mean Germany is expected as a civilian power to “strengthen rule of law”,⁷⁰⁵ and promote “democratisation”,⁷⁰⁶ but they are presumed to “maintain a clear distance from human rights violators” and “never give the impression to be uncritical towards these countries.”⁷⁰⁷ In this manner, for purposes of addressing how Germany’s relationship with Iran may, in fact, problematize civilian power explanations, it is vital to acknowledge a premise that its “‘never again’” approach to foreign policy, is understood to necessitate avoidance of “coddling up to dictators”.⁷⁰⁸ Given that reports note Iran exhibits authoritarian tendencies,⁷⁰⁹ as well as deficits in many areas central to Germany’s subjective interpretation of human rights, rule of law, and democratisation standards,⁷¹⁰ this

⁷⁰¹ Lora Wildenthal, "Human Rights Advocacy and National Identity in West Germany," *Human Rights Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (2000): 1052.

⁷⁰² Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 66.

⁷⁰³ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁴ Pfeil, 88-105.

⁷⁰⁵ Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," 35.; Pfeil, 99.; Maull, "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 14-15.

⁷⁰⁶ Pfeil, 99.; Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 66.

⁷⁰⁷ Pfeil, 101.

⁷⁰⁸ Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 66.

⁷⁰⁹ The Economist, "Democracy Index 2018," (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2018).

⁷¹⁰ Human Rights Watch, "Iran: Events of 2018," (Human Rights Watch, 2019).; "Iran: Events of 2016," Human Rights Watch, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/iran>.

relationship, on the surface, would consequently appear to challenge expectations of a civilian power Germany.⁷¹¹ However, despite the appearance of inherent challenges to civilian power expectations of Germany based upon its forging of relations with Iran, other interpretations, in fact, suggest civilian power legitimacy from such relationships.

To explain this interpretation, it is essential to start with an understanding that ideal-type civilian powers, “would promote democratisation in a country even if this would lead to a deterioration in bilateral relations”.⁷¹² This is because for a civilian power, “legitimacy” is a preeminent concern, and legitimacy is predicated upon “laws, institutions [...] rights [...] and on the democratic values that come with them.”⁷¹³ Given that “democracy” remains one of the two fundamental features of the civilian power role concept –the other being “peace”⁷¹⁴ – an ideal-type state conforming to this role concept, is expected to prioritise values of human rights and rule of law, above traditional, rationalist interests, such as trade and commercial relations. Accordingly, prevailing, civilian power assumptions of German foreign policy, advance an interpretation, whereby “‘norms define interests’ [...] and norms and values, such as [...] universal human rights” have ostensibly produced a “missionary element”, in which Germany works to proactively advance its values –rooted in subjective experience– through active dialogue and engagement with other states.⁷¹⁵ Taking these various premises together, there is an argument to be made that relations with states such as Iran, actually demonstrate Germany’s moralistic aims in foreign policy, given the interests behind the relationship are presumed to be of a non-rationalist, non-materialist orientation, and aspire above all, to induce change. Accordingly, based upon a non-rationalist understanding of Germany’s dialogues and engagements, there is profound, legitimizing significance in Germany’s selection of an *Ostpolitik*-inspired strategy, since the policy is understood to express a fundamental belief that “isolation [...] cannot influence a target state”, and “diplomacy [...] and keeping channels of communication open” is the only effective means of seeking change.⁷¹⁶ This means for a Germany truly committed to advancing human rights, rule of law, and democratisation, as a

⁷¹¹ Pfeil, 92-93.; Gordon, 232.

⁷¹² Maull, "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power?', " 17.

⁷¹³ Tewes, 11.

⁷¹⁴ Ibid.

⁷¹⁵ Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power?', " 68-69.

⁷¹⁶ Pinto, 103.

civilian power, a relationship with Iran is, in many respects, considered essential for realisation of such interests. In this manner, although conformity to ideal-type expectations might emphasise avoidance of engaging with states such as Iran, in another sense, a determination to pursue dialogue, through an *Ostpolitik*-inspired strategy, may, in fact, underscore a commitment to civilian power expectations, provided Germany's behaviour and interest in the relationship is attributable to these aims.

However, here, there exists a potential challenge to civilian power assumptions as well: Germany's conformity with civilian power assumptions of human rights, rule of law, and democracy in relations with a state such as Iran, necessitates both demonstrating these constitute leading interests behind its decision to engage, and showing that such aims are not marginalised by other considerations, particularly of a rationalist, and materialist nature. By legitimizing dialogue and engagement as both premised upon, and a catalyst for, improvement in these areas, an inextricable linkage is created, and the very strength of arguments suggesting Germany's policy towards Iran since unification demonstrates commitment to human rights, rule of law, and democratisation, is also its potential weakness.

Based upon these considerations, such premises establish the relative expectations and assumptions of a Germany committed to prioritizing human rights, rule of law, and democratic promotion in its foreign policy as a civilian power. However, before turning to the case of Iran, it is further helpful to consider the extent to which these assumed features are discernible in wider post-unification German foreign policy. After all, if one can demonstrate these assumptions appear true in a broader sense, then it becomes easier to establish confidence in Germany's adherence to, or deviation from such assumptions, in the case of Iran itself. But to what extent have such features appeared in other cases of post-unification German foreign policy?

4.1.1 The Continued Rise of Human Rights in German Foreign Policy

On this note, and to fully appreciate the expected centrality of human rights, rule of law, and democracy promotion in Germany's relationship with Iran, it is helpful to understand that in the years immediately following unification, foreign policy interest in these areas, attained

further prominence within German policy discourse. To Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, this new era necessitated reaffirming Germany's commitment to such considerations, leading to his public reassurance that a newly unified Germany would concern itself above all, with "the responsibility that grows out of the weight".⁷¹⁷ This was to say, issues such as human rights, rule of law, and democratic promotion, appeared destined for intensification under unified Germany's emergent foreign policy agenda. Genscher's successor, Klaus Kinkel, expanded even further upon this moralistic foreign policy understanding of the Berlin Republic,⁷¹⁸ and stated that human rights constituted "a focus of the whole of German foreign policy", leading to characterisations that he aspired "to become the 'foreign minister of human rights'".⁷¹⁹ Considering annual reports from Germany's Foreign Office similarly noted "'protection and promotion of human rights is a focal point of German foreign policy'",⁷²⁰ it appears Germany's official policy documents largely confirm the narrative espoused by elites. In this regard, for some, these narratives, paired with corresponding policy efforts by Germany, constitute "empirical" evidence that German foreign policy on human rights, and similar areas, exhibit "continuity" with role expectations of a civilian power.⁷²¹

However, more than simply representing narratives of prominence within the early years of post-unification German foreign policy, concern over human rights, rule of law, and democracy, further engendered an existential crisis regarding Germany's underlying interests. This is particularly discernible in the context of Germany's commitment to these issues, in debates regarding use of force in the Balkans during the 1990s. In exemplification of this dynamic, although literature and policy documents bespeak a growing tolerance for German participation in multilateral security efforts in the post-unification era,⁷²² as noted in the preceding chapter, and consistent with expectations of a civilian power, use of force remains a

⁷¹⁷ Gordon, 229.

⁷¹⁸ Ibid.

⁷¹⁹ Pfeil, 89.

⁷²⁰ Ibid.

⁷²¹ Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," 42. Anderson and Goodman.; Katzenstein.

⁷²² Philippi, 49.; Die Bundesregierung, "Weißbuch 2016: Zur Sicherheitspolitik Und Zur Zukunft Der Bundeswehr," ed. Bundesministerium der Verteidigung (2016).; Sebastian Bruns, "Germany Takes a Steely Look at the World," (2016), <https://warontherocks.com/2016/07/germany-takes-a-steely-look-at-the-world/>.

taboo for German policymakers and the German public at large.⁷²³ Yet, notwithstanding this aversion to use of force,⁷²⁴ the “bloody wars of Yugoslav succession”⁷²⁵ during the 1990s, served to provoke “questions that challenged fundamental assumptions” of Germany’s stance on the matter, even among left-of-centre parties, which historically represented the staunchest opponents to military participation by the *Bundeswehr*.⁷²⁶ Following the 1995 “massacre in Srebrenica”, debate emerged across the German political spectrum, leading future German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer to implore his *Green/Bündnis 90* colleagues to reconsider their stance on use of force, given a clear infringement upon human rights and rule of law.⁷²⁷ As Fischer presented the situation:

*“We are in a real conflict between basic values. On the one hand, there is the renunciation of force as a vision of a world in which conflicts are resolved rationally, through recourse to laws and majority decisions [...] On the other hand, there is a bloody dilemma that human beings may be able to survive only with the use of military force.”*⁷²⁸

For Germany’s right-of-centre parties, a similar narrative was presented, and explicitly invoked Germany’s historical and collective memories when discussing the subject of potential involvement in Kosovo. Kinkel noted: “in Germany, we also lived in a situation where we were unable to liberate ourselves from a tyrant”, adding that “somebody who does not stop evil becomes responsible for it.”⁷²⁹ In this manner, notwithstanding suggestions a “‘humanitarian’ and ‘realist’” division occurred at this time in debates,⁷³⁰ striking moralistic narratives, predicated upon preoccupation with Germany’s underlying identity in foreign policy, transcended party lines. Equally important, public opinion exhibited strong approval for German involvement,⁷³¹ evidencing this moralistic and humanitarian identity held particular salience for the wider German public.

⁷²³ Harnisch and Maull, 1-4.; Maull, 91-106.

⁷²⁴ Smith, 49.; Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 703.

⁷²⁵ 704.

⁷²⁶ Ibid.

⁷²⁷ Ibid., 705.; Philippi, 55-56.

⁷²⁸ Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 63.

⁷²⁹ Wittlinger and Larose, 487.

⁷³⁰ Hanns Maull, "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", *ibid.* 9, no. 2 (2000): 10.

⁷³¹ Ruth Wittlinger and Martin Larose, "No Future for Germany's Past? Collective Memory and German Foreign Policy," *ibid.* 16, no. 4 (2007): 487.; Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 65.

Consequently, at its essence, such debate rested upon a conflict, and ultimate resolution of conflicting fundamental principles underlying German foreign policy, and identity, as embodied by different facets of the civilian power role concept. Specifically, in this case: avoiding use of force, or affirming a commitment to the condition of human rights and “rule of law”.⁷³² In doing so, a critical and significant shift towards reconsideration of, and even “vocal” advocacy for, German participation in multilateral security efforts by traditional opponents on the left,⁷³³ truly captures the importance of Germany’s commitment to protect and advance human rights, rule of law, and democratisation in the post-unification era. In this sense, the true importance of this case is not only a corroboration of Germany’s commitment to human rights, rule of law, and democratic initiatives in its foreign policy, but a clear example these interests represented the preeminent consideration of its policy efforts, by superseding competing facets of Germany’s civilian power role concept (abhorrence of using military force). Despite the obvious conflict between these facets of the civilian power role concept, German concern and prioritisation of human rights, rule of law, and democratisation in the Balkans case, implies a nearly “ideal type of civilian power in the most important aspects”,⁷³⁴ in which “human rights were predominant.”⁷³⁵

Following debates over German participation in Balkans peacekeeping efforts, a “moral” approach to German foreign policy, “in defence of victims of persecution”, only expanded, leading Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and his Foreign Minister Fischer, to further emphasise “human rights” as a source of “political coherence, direction and legitimacy to their foreign policy objectives.”⁷³⁶ However, far from being mere interests of a single coalition, or discrete period of time in post-unification German foreign policy, from the outset of her time in office, Chancellor Angela Merkel similarly invoked Germany’s historical and collective memories concerning the fundamental importance of “democracy” and “human rights”.⁷³⁷ This, in turn, has resulted in vocal criticism from her concerning the state of human rights in other nations,⁷³⁸ and a clear articulation of the necessity for “fight[ing] tirelessly for human rights

⁷³² Philippi, 49.

⁷³³ Smith, 59.

⁷³⁴ Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 71-2.

⁷³⁵ Philippi, 63.

⁷³⁶ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 705-06.

⁷³⁷ Wittlinger, "The Merkel Government's Politics of the Past," 19.

⁷³⁸ Ibid., 13.

and against unjust regimes".⁷³⁹ In this regard, outside the realm of Germany's relations with Iran, there are not only clear examples of German foreign policy which appear to validate civilian power role expectations, but ones suggesting human rights, rule of law, and democratisation, constitute the preeminent interests for a civilian power Germany, transcending coalitions, as well as time. With this in mind, it would be fully expected that human rights, rule of law, and democratic promotion, stand to meaningfully influence Germany's relationship with Iran, throughout the post-unification era, much as it does other cases of German foreign policy. As a result, instances in which Germany deviates from this behaviour in its relationship with Iran, not only serve to downgrade confidence in human rights, rule of law, and democratisation as an explanation for the relationship, but in turn, further challenge prevailing civilian power expectations of Germany. With these expectations established, it is now possible to turn attention to the relationship itself.

4.2 Critical Dialogue and Human Rights in Early-Unification Relations with Iran

Given expectations of Germany in the areas of human rights, rule of law, and democratisation, at the time of unification, Iran posed an interesting challenge for its policymakers. Shortly preceding German unification, a prominent fatwa issued by Iran's then Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, called for the murder of renowned novelist Salman Rushdie, following the release of his book, *Satanic Verses*. In response, a joint declaration of leading German parties, characterised the fatwa as "a declaration of war against our system of rights and values, against international law [...] [meaning] the freedom-loving spirit of our constitution permits no retreat in the face of such threats".⁷⁴⁰ In this sense, there were hardly any illusions as to whom a newly reunified Germany would be dealing with in the establishment of relations, and the situation appeared exceedingly problematic for a civilian power Germany. Nevertheless, amidst the sense of elation spanning a once intractably divided, and now united Germany, seemingly impossible policy goals suddenly appeared well reasoned, and for some, relations with Iran were no different.

⁷³⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁰ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*; Deutscher Bundestag, "Bundestagdrucksache 11/4057, February 22, 1989," (1989).

Critically, during the early years of unification, a sequence of events occurred within Iran, implying not only the viability of intensifying relations with Iran, but advancement of human rights concerns in particular. Following the death of Khomeini in 1989, and the ascendancy of a perceived reformist in Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani,⁷⁴¹ a palpable sense emerged that Iran was “moving toward moderation” in its policies.⁷⁴² With these factors in mind, the coalition under Chancellor Kohl characterised its emergent strategy as premised upon engagement during a crucial juncture, in which “the human rights situation” was a preeminent concern, and “a policy of isolation [towards Iran] [...] is neither advisable, nor promising”.⁷⁴³ Allegedly central to this policy calculus, was an understanding that “ostracizing Iran would only serve to strengthen its ‘theocratic hard-liners’”,⁷⁴⁴ and those more inclined to Germany’s interpretation of human rights, rule of law, and democratic reforms, would be undermined or marginalised as a consequence. Based upon this interpretation of interests, it is advanced by some that Germany’s policy in the early years of unification, was indeed, emblematic of a German commitment to human rights, rule of law, and democratisation, as evidenced by its desire to seek empowerment of moderates, improve human rights, and resolve the “*fatwa* against Salman Rushdie”.⁷⁴⁵ In this sense, determined efforts from Germany to pursue dialogue and engagement, may be attributable to such underlying interests. In support of this interpretation, not only did early years of the Berlin Republic’s policy witness an overall “improve[ment] and [...] further development” of relations between Germany and Iran, but imperatively, featured intensification of human rights discussions.⁷⁴⁶ With a series of “joint seminars on [...] human rights [...], conferences [...] and [...] meetings between the human rights committees of the [...] countries’ parliaments”, characterisations of “a unique and unrivalled level of cooperation” in the area⁷⁴⁷ appeared accurate. Accordingly, on the surface, policy initiatives seemed to validate Germany’s espoused commitment to engage with its Iranian counterparts, particularly regarding issues of human rights, rule of law, and

⁷⁴¹ Reissner, 36.

⁷⁴² Ibid.

⁷⁴³ Bundesregierung, "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Drucksache 13/3483," 2.

⁷⁴⁴ Perthes, 12.

⁷⁴⁵ Reissner, 36.; Struwe, 3-4.

⁷⁴⁶ Mousavian, 126-7.

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid.

democratisation. For example, in May 1993, with the Edinburgh Declaration's ink barely dry, Germany's "Head of the Human Rights Commission" of the *Bundestag* made a visit to Tehran to speak exclusively on the issue of human rights,⁷⁴⁸ followed up almost immediately with a reciprocal visit to Germany by Iran's representative, so as to advance a "development towards mutual understanding [...] over the difficulties on human rights issues."⁷⁴⁹ Despite such overtures, however, implicit in these characterisations, was an underlying sense that notwithstanding gestures of interest, and attempts at engagement over these themes with Iran, differing interpretations of human rights, rule of law, and democratisation endured, and tangible progress eluded German policymakers.

Nevertheless, Germany's attempts to engage on the theme continued. Between the "Fourth Conference on Human Rights in Iran and Germany" already occurring by 1995,⁷⁵⁰ and "an annual resolution" in the *Bundestag* concerning the Rushdie fatwa⁷⁵¹ throughout the 1990s, a myriad of examples indicated Germany's persistence in raising issue with the state of human rights, rule of law, and democratic values in Iran. In fact, these issues, including the Rushdie fatwa, held so much salience, and engendered such domestic concern within the German public sphere and media, that a cultural agreement between Iran and Germany was prominently rejected by representatives of *Bundesländer*.⁷⁵² In this sense, there was both a clear tendency within Germany to express concern over the state of affairs in Iran, as well as tangible instances where such concern shaped German policy, albeit largely at the domestic level.

However, despite the prominence of such narratives within the public sphere during the early years of post-unification relations with Iran, substantive, or genuine commitment on the part of the *Bundesregierung*, still remained a source of debate. This discussion was particularly noticeable during the early years of Germany's dialogue approach, amongst opposition parties on the left.⁷⁵³ Key instances of human rights abuses in Iran were recurrent, including the notable arrest and alleged torture of Iranian writer Faraj Sarkuhi following a meeting with

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid., 35.

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid., 37-8.

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid., 38.

⁷⁵¹ Ibid., 88.

⁷⁵² Ibid., 199-200.

⁷⁵³ Reissner, 41-42.

Germany's cultural attaché in Tehran.⁷⁵⁴ This resulted in further questions of the government's approach, leading Karsten Voigt, a Social Democrat, to implore realisation by his colleagues in the *Bundestag*, that merely "specifying goals and values" is ultimately insufficient, and "[Germany] must make clear to the Iranians that the German-Iranian friendship [...] is not beyond human rights, democracy and international law."⁷⁵⁵ In doing so, what Voigt's comments capture well, is a sense that true contingency and meaningful action by Germany, was absent, and in the eyes of critics, the government had failed to demonstrate its ostensible prioritisation of values regarding human rights, rule of law, and democratisation, as a civilian power. In short, there was a sense for some that Germany's dialogue policy was "too soft and certainly not sufficient" to incentivise desired changes.⁷⁵⁶

Contributing to this sense, and although a U.N. Special Representative on Human Rights report, spoke of encouraging internal developments in Iran during the period of critical dialogue, the fact was, in the eyes of onlookers, "no major changes" materialised within Iran's domestic landscape,⁷⁵⁷ and "observed improvements in the realm of human rights were [...] ambiguous"⁷⁵⁸ at best. Facing questions from parties on the left in the *Bundestag*, the coalition was forced to admit "there can be no doubt, that the unchanged human rights situation in Iran gives cause for great concern."⁷⁵⁹ Nevertheless, despite this acknowledgement, the coalition ultimately remained defensive of its strategy, and countered "the government has [...] together with their partners in the EU, undertaken a multitude of initiatives for the betterment of the human rights situation in Iran," as well as actively pursued cases of human rights violations with Iranian authorities.⁷⁶⁰ Kinkel himself similarly defended a policy of dialogue, arguing "the 'policy of non-isolation' along with the goal of 'active influence' possessed credibility, given it amassed the strong support of all fifteen foreign ministers of the European Union".⁷⁶¹ In other words, with a lack of tangible improvement, and noted public concern, the coalition's answer to such challenges was to leverage its espoused commitment to

⁷⁵⁴ Struwe, 25.

⁷⁵⁵ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll 13/169," (1997), 15278.

⁷⁵⁶ Perthes, 12.

⁷⁵⁷ Struwe, 24.

⁷⁵⁸ Mousavian, 208.

⁷⁵⁹ Bundesregierung, "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Drucksache 13/3483," 5.

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid., 5-6.

⁷⁶¹ Reissner, 40.

multilateralism as a source of legitimacy for its strategy, and attempt to accentuate its own due diligence, by pointing out that notwithstanding a multilateral nature of the policy, Germany nevertheless raised the issue on a bilateral basis. In this sense, and of great significance, for the coalition under Kohl, merely raising the issue bilaterally was supposed to evidence Germany's commitment to such interests, and when controversy appeared on the domestic front, elite-policymakers invoked a narrative suggesting considerations including multilateralism, shaped, and potentially constrained their ability to change course. However, based upon the findings of chapter two –in which Germany was evidenced to act unilaterally in pursuit of its subjective interests towards Iran– one would accordingly expect Germany's interests in human rights, rule of law, and democratisation, as a civilian power, to be unhindered, if central to explaining Germany's relationship with Iran.

Consequently, the argument advanced by Kohl's coalition appears to greatly contradict Germany's previously established behaviour in this relationship, as well as established trends concerning the apparent hierarchy of civilian power interests. Given Kohl's coalition attempted to downplay Germany's bilateral responsibility for addressing these issues – notwithstanding clear bilateral attempts– this, in turn, appears to downgrade confidence in human rights, rule of law, and democratisation as substantive interests for unified Germany's relationship with Iran, during the early years of its emerging strategy towards Iran. The early years of dialogue not only reflect an elite-led defence of policy failing to demonstrate tangible progress in these areas, but far more critically, features misleading claims regarding Germany's capacity to bilaterally advance these issues.

Ultimately, for some observers, in the early years of dialogue, this issue area could be summed up as: "Germany [...] tolerat[ing] the differences [...] between themselves and Iran on the issue of human rights" preceding the Mykonos verdict in 1997.⁷⁶² Others were even more cynical in their assessment, arguing that a "defining feature of this relationship [...] has been the suppression of 'human rights and democracy'".⁷⁶³ Such criticisms, notwithstanding, shortly following the Mykonos ruling in 1997, an interpretation emerged, that at long last, there were

⁷⁶² Mousavian, 136.

⁷⁶³ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 175.

not only indications its policy of dialogue was efficacious, but that Germany was approaching a juncture at which the advancement of human rights, rule of law, and democratisation could be further prioritised.

4.3 Comprehensive Dialogue and Questions of Contingency

On this note, despite a conservative resurgence during Iran's 1992 *Majlis* elections, it is said the Rafsanjani years "laid the groundwork" for future reforms and moderations, including those of Mohammad Khatami.⁷⁶⁴ Khatami's ascendancy to the Iranian presidency entailed an "agenda of détente and reform",⁷⁶⁵ and in particular, Khatami voiced aspirations to "safeguard the rule of law and human rights", with "freedom of expression and speech [...] [as] the most crucial area of contention".⁷⁶⁶ In short, Khatami's rhetoric epitomised the very moderation and reforms which Germany espoused to seek in its strategy towards Iran. As a result, many indeed felt Khatami's ascendancy bestowed much desired credibility and legitimacy to Germany's strategy after all,⁷⁶⁷ with human rights proponents concluding: "the election of [...] Khatami was a clear vote of the Iranian people for a more accountable government, the rule of law, and against the harassment and discrimination of women".⁷⁶⁸

With these developments, and notwithstanding setbacks or controversy surrounding the relationship, there was "wide consensus across the German political class" that Germany should continue its strategy going forward,⁷⁶⁹ as some argued Khatami's election confirmed that in accordance with Germany's *Ostpolitik*-inspired philosophy, isolating Iran, or failing to engage, would merely stymie visibly occurring Iranian reforms and moderation.⁷⁷⁰ With this understanding in mind, following Khatami's election –and despite a Red-Green coalition shift in Germany– Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, and as his noted human rights advocate Foreign Minister, Joschka Fischer, preserved the existing policy approach. With a mere rebranding

⁷⁶⁴ Reissner, 37.

⁷⁶⁵ Kaussler, "European Union Constructive Engagement with Iran (2000–2004): An Exercise in Conditional Human Rights Diplomacy," 271.

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid., 275–84.

⁷⁶⁷ Struwe, 41.; Pinto, 107–8.; Bergenäs, 502.

⁷⁶⁸ Struwe, 41.

⁷⁶⁹ Perthes, 12.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid.

from “critical”, to “comprehensive dialogue”, the new coalition’s strategy ultimately aspired to address “the same concerns”, with its “continuation [...] under a different heading.”⁷⁷¹ Yet, differently this time, “human rights” purportedly would appear centre stage, as an even more preeminent area of concern.⁷⁷² In this manner, ostensibly, Germany was more committed than ever to human rights, rule of law, and democratisation in its relationship with Iran, given a very explicit, increased prioritisation of these interests. Consequently, amidst the renewed emphasis on human rights after the rise of Khatami, in many respects, the years following implementation of comprehensive dialogue represent the most critical for assessing whether human rights, rule of law, and democratisation truly shape Germany’s foreign policy, or conversely, challenge civilian power expectations of Germany in this case.

Moreover, in establishing the parameters for this new era of its relationship, Germany articulated a need for Tehran to demonstrate tangible convergence to internationally recognised norms of human rights and rule of law, “before it could be accepted as a political and economic partner.”⁷⁷³ In this sense, although Germany appeared vague regarding benchmarks for Iran’s improvement in this area, it was nevertheless explicitly stated, intensification in other areas of the relationship remained contingent upon progress in the key realms of human rights, rule of law, and democratisation.⁷⁷⁴ In doing so, Germany’s apparent interests entering the period of comprehensive dialogue implied strong consistency with civilian power expectations –where one is expected to always prioritise improvement in human rights and rule of law over conflicting goals and interests.⁷⁷⁵ This point is fundamental, as current literature concerning the period in question utilises supposed contingency of relations, particularly the “systemi[c] inclu[sion] [of] a so called human rights clause in [...] trade and cooperation agreements with other countries”,⁷⁷⁶ as evidence corroborating a European, and further, German commitment, to the advancement of such concerns. Given critics of Germany’s foreign policy toward Iran often posit Berlin is merely driven by

⁷⁷¹ Struwe, 5.

⁷⁷² Bergenäs, 502.; Pinto, 108.

⁷⁷³ Struwe, 14.; Bundesregierung, "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Drucksache 13/3483."

⁷⁷⁴ Mousavian, 210.; Kaussler, "European Union Constructive Engagement with Iran (2000–2004): An Exercise in Conditional Human Rights Diplomacy," 270-73.; Struwe, 14.

⁷⁷⁵ Steinberg, 16.

⁷⁷⁶ Kaussler, "European Union Constructive Engagement with Iran (2000–2004): An Exercise in Conditional Human Rights Diplomacy," 272.

commercial and trade interests,⁷⁷⁷ utilisation of such a clause, or other contingency, would serve to upgrade confidence in assumptions of Germany's commitment to human rights, rule of law, and democratisation, while similarly downgrading confidence in more rationalist, and materialist interests, as encapsulated by trade. Indeed, in such a dynamic, seemingly controversial economic engagement could, potentially, be attributable to good faith efforts to incentivise reforms, and empower moderates in Iran, by offering an "economic carrot".⁷⁷⁸ However, by expressly articulating such contingencies and related understanding, robust engagement in other areas becomes more meaningful, and in turn, could suggest human rights, rule of law, and democratisation are subservient to these other interests. This means, to establish confidence in espoused interests as a key factor shaping Germany's policy towards Iran, economic, or other interests, need to be evidenced as potentially attributable to further enticement of reform efforts, or constituting secondary interests, rather than a primary goal in and of itself –particularly during the period of comprehensive dialogue. But to what extent was this evidenced during Germany's new era of old policy?

Insightfully, despite voiced optimism, Germany's relations with Iran following the election of Khatami, immediately presented challenges to the Kohl government's pledge in its final months, that "human rights [...] will not be left aside under any circumstances."⁷⁷⁹ The first meeting of a new era found itself marred by Iran's decision to sentence a German citizen, Helmut Hofer, to death by stoning, for his alleged relationship with an Iranian woman, which in turn, only served as a prominent reminder to Germany's public, that Iran's state of human rights, and rule of law, continued to defy German expectations of progress.⁷⁸⁰ As a microcosm of the broader dynamics at play, Kinkel explicitly stated further relations were only possible upon resolution of the Hofer case, yet, despite professed contingency, Kinkel and his Iranian counterpart Kamal Kharazi nevertheless pursued robust discussion concerning intensification of "political and economic relations."⁷⁸¹ When Kinkel's successor, Joschka Fischer, declared the case's eventual resolution as a "removal of the key obstacle for betterment of German-

⁷⁷⁷ Refer to chapters one and three.

⁷⁷⁸ Kaussler, "European Union Constructive Engagement with Iran (2000–2004): An Exercise in Conditional Human Rights Diplomacy," 270-73.

⁷⁷⁹ Struwe, 47.

⁷⁸⁰ Ibid.; "In Den Händen Der Mullahs," *Der Spiegel* 2015.

⁷⁸¹ 47.

Iranian relations," it was implied a long awaited movement in the right direction was finally occurring.⁷⁸² However, despite this characterisation, and a previously stated contingency of relations upon resolution of this case, Germany's relationship had, in fact, already witnessed a marked intensification, including a myriad of German "business delegations" arriving in Tehran, as part of a heightened German interest in "trade and investment".⁷⁸³

Concurrent to these matters, Iran exhibited a continuation of human rights abuses, including a July 1999 attack upon peaceful student protests, by regime-led "club wielders".⁷⁸⁴ Amidst the occurrence of such events, themes of "civil liberties and human rights [appeared] on the forefront of the Iranian political scene",⁷⁸⁵ and Khatami's espoused intent to implement reforms in Iran faced a critical challenge, as a "conservative backlash" emerged, featuring narratives declaring "violence [as] a legitimate means of asserting authority" by regime loyalists.⁷⁸⁶ Despite such a tense interplay between these Iranian sides, Berlin was nevertheless determined to continue relations, and Schröder became "the first Western leader to invite the Iranian president" to his country. The coalition, for its part, attempted to sustain human rights, rule of law, and democratisation as considerations within dialogue, leading Fischer and his Green Party cohorts to invite a wide range of individuals from Iran for a conference, aiming "to guarantee 'human rights' and 'fundamental democratic freedoms.'"⁷⁸⁷ The planned conference itself was not without controversy, however, as organisers chose to exclude certain elements of the Iranian opposition, provoking criticism from human rights groups.⁷⁸⁸ As a result, despite Germany's cognizance that its "moderates" were comprised of numerous groups, within a divisive and contentious Iranian political spectrum,⁷⁸⁹ it is interesting to note, Berlin appeared to selectively engage groups, so as to ensure minimal frustration by hard-line forces in Iran. The implication was: criticism within Germany, that a

⁷⁸² "In Den Händen Der Mullahs."

⁷⁸³ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 177.; German-Iranian Chamber of Industry and Commerce, "Deutsch-Iranischer Wirtschaftspiegel," (1999), 5.

⁷⁸⁴ Behrooz Ghamari-Tabrizi, "Globalization, Islam, and Human Rights: The Case of Iran," *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 23, no. 1 (2000): 33.

⁷⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁷ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 177-8.

⁷⁸⁸ Ibid., 178.

⁷⁸⁹ Bundestag, "Iran: Teherans Hegemoniale Und Nukleare Interessen Und Die Haltung Der Internationalen Gemeinschaft," 4-10.

Green Party once committed to the advancement of human rights, rule of law, and democratisation while in opposition, was now wholly indifferent to such issues once in power.⁷⁹⁰ These arguments appeared to gather further momentum publicly in Germany, when upon their return to Iran, many of the conference attendees were arrested, and hard-line factions in Iran leveraged Germany's human rights and rule of law forum, so as to legitimise the closure of numerous newspapers.⁷⁹¹ Critically, despite these clear setbacks to Germany's stated agenda in this area, as well as supposed contingencies, Khatami's visit to Germany in the following weeks was largely notable for a significant increase of Hermes trade guarantees by Schröder's government.⁷⁹² The outcome not only spoke volumes about the Schröder government's intent to sustain dialogue, but indicated a relative indifference of its policy efforts, towards enforcement of contingencies, or prioritisation of human rights, rule of law, and democratisation efforts. Just as Kohl's government had previously demonstrated, Schröder was also unabashed about sustaining ties, and pursuing robust engagement on matters such as trade and investment, without necessary improvement.

For Germany, the mere existence of reformist-minded figures such as Khatami appeared to meet its burden of proof for legitimizing ties of a non-human rights orientation. Despite obvious challenges, German policy documents conveyed strikingly optimistic assessments regarding the prospects for change within Iran's political spectrum, citing a "dynamic [...] open [...] [and] in particular youthful –society".⁷⁹³ As one German Foreign Ministry official interpreted events at the time, the *Majlis* was emblematic of a sincere "stakeholder in the country's quest for democracy".⁷⁹⁴ However, in reality, these optimistic narratives merely obfuscated a resurgence of Iran's hardliners, and in the early 2000s, "more than ever before, the *Majlis* had become a battle ground."⁷⁹⁵ Rather than accurately capture the delicacy of Iran's progress on reforms and political moderation, the German narrative instead chose to selectively highlight positive developments, and in this sense, despite many warning signs,

⁷⁹⁰ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 178.

⁷⁹¹ Ibid., 179.

⁷⁹² Ibid., 180-81.

⁷⁹³ Bundestag, "Iran: Teherans Hegemoniale Und Nukleare Interessen Und Die Haltung Der Internationalen Gemeinschaft," 5.

⁷⁹⁴ Kaussler, "European Union Constructive Engagement with Iran (2000–2004): An Exercise in Conditional Human Rights Diplomacy," 287.

⁷⁹⁵ Ibid., 288.

there was a tendency to interpret events through rose-coloured glasses, amidst a backdrop of public concern. This decision, however, produced cataclysmic results, leading some to infer that at precisely the time in which Iran's reformists needed advocacy the most, a German and European resolve to avoid alienating other Iranian factions, led to a "hardliner usurpation" of moderate positions.⁷⁹⁶ This meant conservative factions, which Berlin espoused a desire to see supplanted by moderates and reformers in Iran, instead underwent a resurgence in the years that followed, with impressive gains in the 2004 *Majlis* elections.⁷⁹⁷ Despite these setbacks for a human rights, rule of law, and democratisation agenda, during the same year, not only did Germany continue trade relations, but German exports to Iran increased by 33%, meaning by the following year, trade with Iran occurred in excess of €4 billion.⁷⁹⁸ The outcome being: Iranian "economic liberalisation", without a commensurate improvement in key areas of human rights, rule of law, and democratisation.⁷⁹⁹

The ensuing years marked a particularly grave deterioration of Iranian human rights, rule of law, and democratisation, as the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2005, resulted in what German policy documents note was a sizeable increase in executions, politically motivated prosecutions, discrimination of religious minorities,⁸⁰⁰ and a general expansion of conservative "control" over key institutional mechanisms in Iran.⁸⁰¹ Nevertheless, Germany continued its robust commercial and trade relations, including exports worth over \$3 billion as late as 2012.⁸⁰² All of this occurring despite a 2010 characterisation in official documents that Iranian human rights and rule of law were in a "catastrophic" state.⁸⁰³ In this regard, not only did Germany clearly intensify political and economic relations with Iran before any substantive reforms emerged, but they pursued an intensification of economic engagement with Iran

⁷⁹⁶ Ibid., 292.

⁷⁹⁷ Ibid., 289-91.

⁷⁹⁸ Küntzel, "Germany and a Nuclear Iran," 54.; Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 237.

⁷⁹⁹ Kaussler, "European Union Constructive Engagement with Iran (2000–2004): An Exercise in Conditional Human Rights Diplomacy," 279.

⁸⁰⁰ Deutscher Bundestag, "Antrag Der Fraktionen Cdu/Csu, Spd, Fdp Und Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, Drucksache 17/4011 " (2010).

⁸⁰¹ "Iran: Teherans Hegemoniale Und Nukleare Interessen Und Die Haltung Der Internationalen Gemeinschaft," "Iran: Teherans Hegemoniale Und Nukleare Interessen Und Die Haltung Der Internationalen Gemeinschaft," 8.

⁸⁰² Küntzel, "Germany and a Nuclear Iran," 51.

⁸⁰³ Deutscher Bundestag, "Das Signal an Teheran Hätte Stärker Sein Können," (2010).

during a time in which they acknowledged human rights, rule of law, and democratisation faced a serious regression. This, in and of itself, appears to significantly downgrade confidence in Germany's commitment to human rights, rule of law, and democratisation as an explanation of the relationship, and in turn, such behaviour largely challenges civilian power expectations. However, even more problematic for such a commitment, and civilian power understandings alike, is evidence indicating Germany was unwilling to attempt leveraging its economic relationship with Iran, to see furtherance of reforms.

Considering the alleged calculus behind successive dialogues was “the provision of rewards as a motivation for change”,⁸⁰⁴ one would expect commercial and trade relations to serve as enticement, and accordingly, bespeak non-economic interests. For the Iranian negotiating parties, however, discussions with Germany over human rights, rule of law, and democratic reforms, merely constituted a formality, because Germany both conveyed a strong aversion to discontinuing economic ties despite failed progress,⁸⁰⁵ and appeared to lack the stomach for “us[ing] ‘sticks’ or deny[ing] ‘carrots’”.⁸⁰⁶ In this manner, Germany's subsequent unwillingness to utilise its economic relationship as leverage for normative interests such as human rights, both evidenced a lack of true contingency for its wider policy, and critically as such, implied a potential subservience of human rights, rule of law, and democratisation, to more rationalist and materialist, economic interests. This appears particularly problematic, in that as noted previously, economic interests for a civilian power, are expected to remain at most, secondary to normative interests.⁸⁰⁷

Interestingly, the only true example of German policy contingency upon human rights, rule of law, and democratisation, towards Iran, appeared in the context of its participation in E.U. level Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) discussions. As party to discussions in which human rights improvement was an undeniable precondition,⁸⁰⁸ this gave the impression that from 2003 onwards, Germany's policy towards Iran represented a “conditional

⁸⁰⁴ Reissner, 42.

⁸⁰⁵ Ibid., 38-9.

⁸⁰⁶ Struwe, 40.

⁸⁰⁷ Refer to chapter two.

⁸⁰⁸ Kaussler, "European Union Constructive Engagement with Iran (2000–2004): An Exercise in Conditional Human Rights Diplomacy," 269.

engagement.”⁸⁰⁹ However, what such inferred conditionality, or contingency, seems to reflect, is a tendency by some to interpret discrete instances of German contingency in a multilateral context, as confirmation of its bilateral interest towards Iran. In fact, and of profound significance, although the E.U. indeed demonstrated serious engagement, discussion, and contingency on these issues,⁸¹⁰ Germany itself –ostensibly representing a preeminent advocate for human rights, rule of law, and democratisation in foreign policy as a civilian power– instead stated that while it “thematizes human rights violations in Iran through bilateral contacts [...] most [issues] become advanced as EU-demarches [or] through the EU-Presidency”,⁸¹¹ implying true responsibility for such efforts, rests with collective European initiatives. In this respect, Germany’s desire to portray such policy interests as an issue for the E.U. to address, concurrent to its unwillingness to meaningfully press the issue, or enforce contingency at the bilateral level, ultimately suggests Germany’s personal interests in relations with Iran, primarily exist beyond the scope of human rights, rule of law, and democratisation.

4.4 A Movement Away from Human Rights, but Continuity in Policy

This interpretation is further encouraged, when considering the fact that despite clear challenges to human rights, rule of law, and democratisation during the years of successive dialogues, and engagements with Iran, none of the leading parties within the *Bundestag* called for complete severance of ties. Indeed, criticism was voiced concerning the state of human rights, but ultimately, Germany sustained its approach across a series of both “conservative and social democratic-led governments”,⁸¹² and Germany’s unwavering commitment to its strategy, despite an inability to produce reforms, strongly suggests that in the eyes of elite-policymakers, the benefits were elsewhere. For some, the implication of policy continuity merely meant Germany missed opportunities to fully engage Iranian civil society groups, and perhaps failed to grasp Iran’s internal dynamics⁸¹³ –implying ineffectualness of policy, rather

⁸⁰⁹ Perthes, 11.

⁸¹⁰ Kaussler, "European Union Constructive Engagement with Iran (2000–2004): An Exercise in Conditional Human Rights Diplomacy," 274-5.; Mousavian, 192.

⁸¹¹ Die Bundesregierung, "Menschenrechtliche Lage Der Baha'i Im Iran, Drucksache 16/1635," (2006), 3.

⁸¹² Perthes, 12.

⁸¹³ Reissner, 38-43.

than different underlying interests per se. However, critically, Germany's decision to sustain its approach, even during noted conservative resurgences in Iran, raises further doubts, given that its policy ostensibly sought to empower moderates, rather than to engage the hardliners seen as responsible for facilitating abuses of human rights, and rule of law. That is to say, if Germany did engage with such actors in furtherance of its aims, this might cast further doubt upon its policy as a meaningful attempt to prioritise human rights, rule of law, and democratisation in this case. But to what extent did Germany's policy towards Iran include engagement with such actors?

4.4.1 German Security Cooperation with Iran

In consideration of whether Germany's engagement with Iran involved association with parties linked to human rights and rule of law abuses, it is particularly revealing to consider Germany's prominent cultivation of ties to Iranian security and intelligence services. When Germany began, in the eyes of some observers, to move away from a preeminent focus upon human rights in relations with Iran during the early-2000s,⁸¹⁴ a central aspect of this supposed shift, entailed expansion of a "bilateral security dialogue", with "an unprecedented level of trust and openness".⁸¹⁵ In doing so, this decision indicated a different prioritisation of policy issues for Germany, including terrorism,⁸¹⁶ which ultimately resulted in "a commitment to [...] international security and strategic concerns rather than to human security."⁸¹⁷

Understandably, following the September 11, 2001 attacks, a greater focus was placed upon anti-terrorism efforts, and international security, however, notwithstanding the increased policy relevance of such issues, it is profoundly significant to note Germany's cooperation with Iran over such matters, in fact, predated this trend. German security and intelligence cooperation with Iran has constituted a key area of collaboration for Germany since the time of unification, with Kohl's intelligence and security advisor, Bernd Schmidbauer, making an official visit to Tehran in 1992.⁸¹⁸ In this respect, since the emergence of Germany's dialogue

⁸¹⁴ Kaussler, "European Union Constructive Engagement with Iran (2000–2004): An Exercise in Conditional Human Rights Diplomacy," 288-9.

⁸¹⁵ Perthes, 13.

⁸¹⁶ Mousavian, 135.

⁸¹⁷ Kaussler, "European Union Constructive Engagement with Iran (2000–2004): An Exercise in Conditional Human Rights Diplomacy," 292.

⁸¹⁸ Mousavian, 28.

policy, there is a clear pattern of cooperation between German and Iranian security and intelligence services, constituting a fundamental, albeit rarely emphasised aspect of its post-unification relationship.

Imperatively, though, by cultivating such an aspect of the relationship with Iran, this level of engagement appears to problematize both Germany's espoused policy concerning human rights, rule of law, and democratisation, as well as civilian power expectations, in that these entities appear detrimental to the empowerment of reformist-oriented stakeholders. In exemplification of this, it is critical to note, German policymakers conceded, the very Iranian security services which they engaged, were the same parties responsible for myriad assassinations, and other prominent instances of human rights and rule of law abuses.⁸¹⁹ One of the key figures Schmidbauer and other German officials engaged with regarding security matters during the period of critical dialogue, was Ali Fallahian, then head of Iran's foreign intelligence service, and a party not only later implicated by the Mykonos ruling, but one who had publicly bragged about Iran's participation.⁸²⁰ Although Germany's collaboration with these figures provoked significant controversy amongst the German public, policymakers were sufficiently indifferent to continue high-profile meetings and official visits.⁸²¹ However, and imperative for considering the manner in which this behaviour casts further doubt on Germany's commitment to human rights, rule of law, and democratisation efforts in this relationship, the wider policy narrative reflected underlying concern that engaging such parties, did pose a fundamental challenge to Germany's commitment in this area. This led one Social Democrat to publicly lament Germany "can't muster enough economic power to enforce a decent human rights performance within Iran."⁸²² Critics in the Green Party were even harsher, surmising an apparent conflict of Germany's responsibilities, and causing one of its members to publicly ask: "why does the government hold confidential talks with the chiefs of the secret services of totalitarian states?"⁸²³

⁸¹⁹ Bundesregierung, "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Drucksache 13/3483," 1.

⁸²⁰ Lane, 79-80.

⁸²¹ Reissner, 40.; Lane, 79-81.

⁸²² 80.

⁸²³ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 164.

In this sense, engagement with these entities appeared to engender a sense Germany's engagement was antithetical to expectations of a state committed to human rights, rule of law, and democratisation. Yet, notwithstanding public outcry, and the accentuation of a policy appearing to trivialise Germany's anticipated commitment to interests in this area, elite-policymakers sustained their collaboration with Iran's security and intelligence services, and a Green Party once critical of this engagement while in opposition, intriguingly "no longer ruled out 'relations with the secret services of Iran'" once in power.⁸²⁴

For Germany, the decision to engage more robustly with Iranian security and intelligence services during the 21st Century, in turn, underscored a broader, "unresolved conflict of goals between effective action against terrorism and respect for human rights," as it sought to further engage with security services in countries from which terror threats originated.⁸²⁵ Problematic for a civilian power Germany, however, is that Iran's "fundamental interest [...] [of] security [is] security of the regime".⁸²⁶ This means, although Germany ostensibly prioritises "a relationship between state and society where human rights and rule of law are guaranteed," Iran's "strong state" definition of security, dictates cooperation is foremost predicated upon facilitating its resiliency,⁸²⁷ and hindering reforms seen as destabilizing to the status quo.

With this in mind, Germany evidenced a clear, and conscious pattern of engagement with factions not simply responsible for past abuses of human rights, and rule of law, but the ones seemingly determined to stymie moderates, and reforms in these areas. In doing so, Germany's engagement with such entities was ultimately considered beneficial to the empowerment of "hard-line"⁸²⁸ parties, while similarly "contribut[ing] to [...] [the] marginalisation" of reformists.⁸²⁹ In particular, Germany's engagement of these forces during dialogue was undeniably problematic for Iranian reformists, in that there was already a

⁸²⁴ Ibid.

⁸²⁵ Steinberg, 15.

⁸²⁶ Reissner, 49.

⁸²⁷ Ibid., 47.

⁸²⁸ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 222.

⁸²⁹ Kaussler, "European Union Constructive Engagement with Iran (2000–2004): An Exercise in Conditional Human Rights Diplomacy," 293.

palpable sense tangible reforms would not emerge.⁸³⁰ Then, with Germany engaging the very entities suppressing such desired reforms, Berlin's actions appeared to cast further doubt upon its ability to facilitate reforms as a staunch advocate thereof. Its behaviour, in turn, provoked questions regarding whether Germany's engagement with Iran factually serves its goal of combating terrorism and oppression, or merely stands to "encourage it."⁸³¹ Regardless, what remains clear is: Germany's behaviour evidenced a clear awareness of, and ultimate willingness to engage with Iran in other areas of interest, including with non-moderate, non-reformist actors, at the expense of its espoused ambitions, and civilian power responsibilities, as a committed advocate of human rights, rule of law, and democratisation.

Conclusion

With this in mind, although prevailing understandings of post-unification German foreign policy, identity, and interest, as a civilian power, anticipate Germany's commitment to human rights, rule of law, and democratisation, analysis of its relationship with Iran presents clear challenges to these assumptions.

To begin, the chapter expanded upon premises of a Germany ostensibly committed to themes of human rights, rule of law, and democratisation in its foreign policy, in order to establish expected behaviour of a Germany shaped by these interests in its relationship with Iran. Following this, the chapter demonstrated clear examples of how such themes appear in post-unification German foreign policy generally, in order to confirm the validity of these expectations in a wider sense.

Having established both expectations and precedent for Germany in this area, the chapter turned to consideration of the relationship itself, and demonstrated that German policymakers, indeed, invoke a narrative consistent with such interests in the articulation and design of foreign policy towards Iran. Despite this espoused rhetoric by German policymakers, however, the chapter critically established that Germany's foreign policy towards Iran, has produced few tangible benefits, or progress, in the areas of human rights,

⁸³⁰ Reissner, 43.

⁸³¹ Lane, 86.

rule of law, and democratisation. This, in turn, cast doubt upon its interest in these areas of the relationship. Furthermore, despite claims by German policymakers, at critical junctures, that Germany would both increase its focus upon such interests, and critically, make improvement in these areas a contingency for sustaining other aspects of the relationship, evidence indicated Germany did not change its approach, or enforce any contingency, despite a clear regression in the state of Iran's human rights, and rule of law situation. In fact, the chapter showed Germany actually increased its engagement with Iran, including, in particular, economic ties.

In this manner, the Berlin Republic evidenced an unwillingness to even attempt leveraging its economic relationship to seek improvement in human rights, rule of law, and democratisation, notwithstanding expectations that a civilian power would always prioritise such interests before realist, and materialist interests of foreign policy. In doing so, Germany's actions not only contradict its espoused aims and interests, but further serve to significantly downgrade confidence in its successive dialogues and engagements as predicated upon underlying interests of improving human rights, rule of law, and democratisation in Iran. This similarly means a severe challenge for those to whom Germany's *Ostpolitik*-inspired strategy towards Iran, ostensibly reflects non-economic aims, albeit through economic engagement.

Furthermore, a clear willingness by coalitions, across time and party lines, to sustain Germany's policy towards Iran, suggested its policymakers determine the efficacy of this policy from a different vantage point than progress in human rights, rule of law, and democratisation. In fact, despite Germany's espoused intent to engage and empower moderates, or reformers in Iran, its determination to continue its policy, served to illuminate Germany's robust engagement of the very parties responsible for a subversion of human rights, rule of law, and democratisation, in Iran.

With this evidence in mind, confidence in human rights, rule of law, and democratisation as an explanation of Germany's behaviour and interest in relations with Iran, is low, which in turn, further challenges the civilian power role concept as an explanation of Germany's foreign policy toward Iran. Considering this facet of the civilian power role concept, not only failed to account for Germany's policy, but in fact, appeared at times, subservient to its

economic relationship with Iran, this provokes a fundamental question: does Germany allow its commercial and trade interests to come before civilian power interests in this case? And, moreover, can commercial and trade interests alone, explain Germany's interest in the relationship? With these questions in mind, the next chapter aims to resolve these questions, by considering the extent to which economic ties may account for Germany's relationship with Iran, amidst downgraded confidence in two facets of the civilian power role concept.

Chapter Five: Economic Interests and Questions of Identity in German Foreign Policy Toward Iran

Introduction

Following consideration of two key facets of the civilian power role concept in this relationship –a preference for cooperation and multilateralism over unilateral initiatives, as well as a commitment to human rights, rule of law, and democratisation– analysis has, thus far, suggested prevailing assumptions of German foreign policy, identity, and interest, fail to account for Germany’s relationship with Iran. In doing so, analysis from the preceding chapters not only demonstrated several fundamental aspects of German foreign policy and identity appear problematized by this relationship, but critically, that such challenges appear connected by a common theme of underlying economic interest.

As noted in preceding chapters, the essence of debate, and a source of enduring contradiction within analyses of German foreign policy toward Iran, largely rests upon questions of whether Germany’s interest is attributable to commercial and trade ties. As Iran’s former Ambassador to Germany has noted, “all the factors that have tended to create a bond between Iran and Germany are linked with strong economic relations”.⁸³² In doing so, a leading perspective has advanced “trade interests [...] desire to ensure repayment of [...] debt”,⁸³³ and “commercial relations” as the “primary goal”⁸³⁴ of Germany’s policy towards Iran. Thus, despite numerous accounts which posit German foreign policy towards Iran bespeaks a commitment to normative assumptions over rationalist or materialist calculation –consistent with a constructivist-inspired, civilian power explanation–⁸³⁵ the undeniable existence of robust commercial and trade relations has, nevertheless, provoked characterisations that “money is behind the German decision”⁸³⁶ to cultivate ties. In other words, notwithstanding an ostensible commitment to civilian power assumptions, some critics argue “commercial

⁸³² Mousavian, 132.

⁸³³ Pinto, 101.

⁸³⁴ Reissner, 35.

⁸³⁵ Struwe.; Kaussler, "European Union Constructive Engagement with Iran (2000–2004): An Exercise in Conditional Human Rights Diplomacy."

⁸³⁶ Lane, 80.

interests rather than principle”⁸³⁷ are said to shape German policy towards Iran, by which Germany immorally “see[s] Iran as a market worth selling their sou[l] for”.⁸³⁸ This obvious contradiction, in both literature and supposed disposition for post-unification Germany, has accordingly led to a pivotal question of whether “Iran [should] be courted because of their enormous market potential or should [...] be shunned”.⁸³⁹ Particularly in the sense such ties appear to fundamentally problematize normative assumptions of Germany, and may even suggest features of normalisation as a result.

Despite referring to perceived issues of morality and norms, it is, in fact, the very inability of analyses to address the relationship from a perspective of assumptions underlying German foreign policy, identity, and interests, that has allowed for such enduring disputes. That is to say, the inability to determine at which point a German economic relationship with Iran, actually challenges civilian power assumptions, has offered ample scope for misinterpretation of what does problematize expectations, or may constitute moral indifference. Yet, by considering this aspect of the relationship from an original perspective, concerned with the extent to which an economic relationship may constitute not only an identifiable *interest* for German policy, but also, potentially occur at the expense of civilian power’s crucial premise of *identity* shaping policy, existing contradictions within scholarship on the subject can be overcome.

In this manner, the question of whether trade and commercial relations with Iran constitute Germany’s interest, and can account for the economic policy, is not only fundamental to resolving present contradictions, it is essential for addressing the overarching research question of this thesis. The extent to which post-unification German foreign policy towards Iran serves to challenge fundamental assumptions of contemporary German foreign policy and identity, as encapsulated by the civilian power role concept, is a question based upon an inability to demonstrably show effects of interests and identity shaping Germany’s policy, *beyond* the scope of traditional rationalist and material interests. Or, in other words, interests beyond a commercial and trade orientation. As demonstrated by theoretical and analytical

⁸³⁷ Struwe, 29.

⁸³⁸ Ibid.; Reissner, 34.

⁸³⁹ Gordon, 230.

premises established in chapters one and two, this means if rationalist and materialist aims, such as trade maximisation, should constitute the leading interest of such relations, this accordingly serves to severely downgrade confidence in underlying constructivist assumptions such as the civilian power role concept. In this manner, determining whether commercial, and trade relations account for Germany's policy, and furthermore, may evidence and bespeak primarily rationalist or materialist interests, or a means to facilitate non-economic aims, is vital.

To accomplish these ends, the chapter will consider a nexus of both primary and secondary source material, to address the manner in which both narrative, as well as action, indicate whether Germany's commercial and trade relations constitute a fundamental *interest* that explains its relationship with Iran. This chapter will then leverage these sources to determine whether this interest, indeed bespeaks rationalist and materialist interest calculation, or if elements of Germany's identity, in accordance with the civilian power role concept, may in fact, curb or curtail such interests. In doing so, this chapter aims to demonstrate that while economic relations between these two countries does in fact evidence rationalist and materialist interests for Berlin, a key facet of Germany's identity nevertheless serves to curtail, and even meaningfully shape an otherwise rationalist economic policy towards Iran.

The chapter will begin by establishing an emergence of economic considerations as a source of identity, legitimacy and interest for post-war Germany, which has, in turn, provoked questions regarding the orientation of German interest in the post-unification era, amidst competing analytical and theoretical perspectives. Following the establishment of these key premises, the chapter evidences contemporary German foreign policy towards Iran as a continuation of historically robust economic ties, in which its economic interest vis-à-vis Iran, appears to greatly exceed expected valuation of a market Iran's size. As a consequence of this curious valuation underlying German interest, the chapter then considers why such valuation occurs, and ultimately, demonstrates through in-depth analysis of various economic sectors, that narrative and action by Germany bespeak a unique long-term valuation. In doing so, the chapter indicates Germany's desire for maximised economic engagement substantiates a strikingly rationalist, and materialist disposition on its part, albeit one that is, in fact, ultimately curbed by a non-rationalist, identity-based commitment in policy.

With this in mind, before turning to consideration of the relationship itself, it is firstly essential to understand the manner in which economic interests emerged as a core aspect of contemporary German policy and identity, and how this may appear juxtaposed with assumptions of a civilian power Germany. By establishing this, and the related debates concerning the manner in which economic, commercial, and trade relations are viewed as consistent with, or divergent from prevailing assumptions of contemporary German foreign policy, identity, and interest, one can interpret evidence more effectively.

5.1 An 'Economic Miracle' Gives Rise to Post-War German Identity, Legitimacy, and Debate

With this in mind, regardless of one's interpretation of contemporary German identity and interests, the centrality of economic considerations to German policy remains unambiguous. From the 1951 Schuman Plan of establishing the European Coal and Steel Community⁸⁴⁰ onwards, economic growth represented a key source of West Germany's restoration of sovereignty,⁸⁴¹ ultimately culminating in a distinctive aspect of contemporary, post-unification German power.⁸⁴² Yet, notwithstanding notions of *power*, which may appear more consistent with rationalist interpretations of foreign policy, than a constructivist-inspired, civilian power, the antecedents of Germany's economic ascendancy is a tale originally rooted in both profoundly normative perspectives, and interests. Conceptualizing economic strength as an effective catalyst for "democratizing and legitimizing [...] previously [...] barely legitimate political order",⁸⁴³ cultivating an economically oriented West Germany held promise of bestowing legitimacy to the new Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), both in a domestic context, by facilitating "attachment of [...] citizens"⁸⁴⁴ to the new German state through a positive state-society interplay, as well as creating a source of "international credibility",⁸⁴⁵ in a wider external environment.

⁸⁴⁰ Bulmer, Jeffery, and Paterson, 1.; Hyde-Price, 78.

⁸⁴¹ Bulmer and Paterson, "Germany in the European Union: Gentle Giant or Emergent Leader?," 11.; Bulmer and Paterson, 1387.; Bulmer, Maurer, and Paterson, 179.

⁸⁴² Crawford, 1.

⁸⁴³ Markovits and Reich, 38.; Harold James, *A German Identity: 1770-1990* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989), 4.

⁸⁴⁴ Paterson, "The Reluctant Hegemon? Germany Moves Centre Stage in the European Union," 58.

⁸⁴⁵ Bulmer, Jeffery, and Paterson, 6.

Domestically, the emergence of a *soziale Marktwirtschaft*, is noted to represent a feature of “a Post-Holocaust national identity [...] ‘organised at least as much to provide justice as order or security’ [...] [and] providing [...] conditions [...] for [a] *Zivilmacht* Germany”.⁸⁴⁶ Under the guidance of the Economics Minister, and later Chancellor, Ludwig Erhard, a German tradition of *Ordoliberalism*⁸⁴⁷ served an impetus for integration, open markets, non-intervention and free trade,⁸⁴⁸ through enactment of “a socially responsible political economy”,⁸⁴⁹ in a fundamentally normative sense. In this manner, it can be said, “German collective memory of the Second World War and the Holocaust” not only shaped the development of German “institutions and policies”,⁸⁵⁰ but also the initial economic orientation of the FRG. Bearing these factors in mind, in many respects, Germany’s initial economic ascendancy appears largely consist with civilian power assumptions, despite the tendency for such interests to be considered emblematic of rationalist, or materialist, considerations.

Related to this, in a wider international sense, economic participation was central to Germany’s initial democratic development within Europe,⁸⁵¹ as well as the broader international system, whereby a state once driven by grandiose, *Machtpolitik* ambitions, would instead purposively supplant such rationalist tendencies, as “an economic giant but political dwarf”,⁸⁵² minimizing the temptation of old ways.⁸⁵³ In short, the calculus reflected a Germany shaped by its historical and collective memories, in which wealth became sought in lieu of power,⁸⁵⁴ so as to ensure peace and corresponding legitimacy, both domestically, as well as internationally. In this sense, it is important to consider economic interests at that juncture of

⁸⁴⁶ Hyde-Price, 87.

⁸⁴⁷ Hans-Martin Jaeger, "Governmentality's (Missing) International Dimension and the Promiscuity of German Neoliberalism," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 16 (2013): 37.; Paterson, "Helmut Kohl, 'the Vision Thing' and Escaping the Semi-Sovereignty Trap," 22.

⁸⁴⁸ Bulmer and Paterson, 1393.; Razeen Sally, "Ordoliberalism and the Social Market: Classical Political Economy from Germany," *New Political Economy* 1, no. 2 (1996): 239.; Werner Bonefeld, "Freedom and the Strong State: On German Ordoliberalism," *ibid.* 17, no. 5 (2012): 1.; Viktor J Vanberg, "The Freiburg School: Walter Eucken and Ordoliberalism," in *Freiburg discussion papers on constitutional economics* (Universität Freiburg, 2004), 1.

⁸⁴⁹ Bonefeld, 2.

⁸⁵⁰ Wittlinger and Larose, 483.

⁸⁵¹ William E Paterson, "Does Germany Still Have a European Vocation?," *ibid.* 19, no. 1 (2010): 41.; "Helmut Kohl, 'the Vision Thing' and Escaping the Semi-Sovereignty Trap," 20.

⁸⁵² Crawford, 28.

⁸⁵³ Maull, 96-97.

⁸⁵⁴ Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 65.

post-war Germany, as indicative of a commitment to non-rationalist, and normative interests, rather than aspirations of power, or wealth, constituting interests themselves. In fact, it is this truth, which in turn, gave rise to the very assumptions from which present-day continuity is presumed.

With further economic development, however, and increased sovereignty in the economic sphere, West German economic policy faced a changing landscape. Through Erhard's domestic, *Ordoliberal* inspiration, an emergent *Wirtschaftswunder*, or *economic miracle*,⁸⁵⁵ occurred. As a consequence of the FRG's capacity to "produce consistent wealth for its citizenry",⁸⁵⁶ the approach became a paragon of economic policy conducive to "social cohesion",⁸⁵⁷ as well as "openness to global processes",⁸⁵⁸ leading to a further characterisation of *Modell Deutschland*.⁸⁵⁹ Others accordingly sought to mirror this approach,⁸⁶⁰ in which the once problem child of Europe, now exhibited impressive credentials, and enviable wealth. The implication was: provided the FRG could sustain its momentum, nothing "could stop [...] Germans from being the economic envy of the world,"⁸⁶¹ and West Germany's economic legitimacy, once predicated upon its ability to restore trust between its citizens and the state, while simultaneously reintegrating the FRG into the society of states as a peaceful actor, now possessed a capacity to shape others through economic repute and strength.⁸⁶² In this sense, even if indirect, "power and influence" were now tangible features of German economic policy, albeit predicated upon a capacity to sustain the status.⁸⁶³ Domestically, there were sentiments of a "proud collective memory" as a result of West Germany's economic advancement,⁸⁶⁴ and even with German dispositional traits of *Bescheidenheit* (modesty) and *Zurückhaltung* (reserve),⁸⁶⁵ an overwhelming majority of citizens nevertheless advocated that a top economic position in Europe, if not globally, be reserved for Germany.⁸⁶⁶ Even pride

⁸⁵⁵ Sally, 233.; Markovits and Reich, 173.; James, 4.

⁸⁵⁶ Markovits and Reich, 33.

⁸⁵⁷ Jeffery and Paterson, 60.; James, 4.

⁸⁵⁸ Welch and Wittlinger, 45-46.

⁸⁵⁹ Jeffery and Paterson, 60.; Welch and Wittlinger, 45-46.

⁸⁶⁰ Markovits and Reich, 33.; Jeffery and Paterson, 60.;

⁸⁶¹ Markovits and Reich, 37.

⁸⁶² Bulmer and Paterson, "Germany in the European Union: Gentle Giant or Emergent Leader?," 14.

⁸⁶³ Ibid., 29.

⁸⁶⁴ Markovits and Reich, 31.;

⁸⁶⁵ Hyde-Price, 4.

⁸⁶⁶ Hellmann, "Goodbye Bismarck? The Foreign Policy of Contemporary Germany," 20.

surrounding Germany's currency, the *Deutsche Mark* (DM),⁸⁶⁷ bespoke the valuation citizens placed on economic vitality, and the underlying identity central to it. Yet, by seeking legitimacy via the economic sphere, both the deepening "sense of identity",⁸⁶⁸ as well as an ability to sustain German legitimacy domestically, and internationally,⁸⁶⁹ became inextricably linked to continued success of a German model,⁸⁷⁰ featuring economic vitality.

For the FRG, and later unified Germany, the key to preservation of economic strength lay in a "German foreign economic policy [...] in favour of export-led growth".⁸⁷¹ Given the German economy particularly craves exports,⁸⁷² and is profoundly reliant upon them,⁸⁷³ the result was a Germany, for whom trade became a fundamental foreign policy interest, and active pursuit of trade opportunities constituted a unifying political position.⁸⁷⁴ With this consensus at hand, successive governments, across party-lines, pursued an "explicit, dominant, and consistent tradition", in which pursuant to Germany's "Aussenwirtschaftsgesetz [...] trade is principally unrestricted", and any form of barrier would be exceptional.⁸⁷⁵ In this sense, West Germany's foreign policy mirrored a "highly corporatist" culture in the domestic sphere,⁸⁷⁶ in which interests of policymakers and business leaders aligned, particularly within the foreign, or globalised⁸⁷⁷ realm of economic policy, trade and commercial relations. The FRG accordingly found itself characterised by some as an "extraordinary trader",⁸⁷⁸ whereby an alignment of interests, paired with unique institutional, legal, and identity-based conditions, encouraged a further deepening of Germany's trade and commercial orientation within wider foreign policy efforts.

⁸⁶⁷ Bulmer, Jeffery, and Paterson, 96.; Markovits and Reich, 53.

⁸⁶⁸ Maull, 103-04.

⁸⁶⁹ Markovits and Reich, 38.

⁸⁷⁰ Hyde-Price, 45.

⁸⁷¹ Crawford, 116.

⁸⁷² Markovits and Reich, 152.

⁸⁷³ Paterson, "Beyond Semi-Sovereignty: The New Germany in the New Europe," 173.

⁸⁷⁴ Crawford, 151-52.

⁸⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁷⁶ Hyde-Price, 33.

⁸⁷⁷ Bulmer, Maurer, and Paterson, 200-01.

⁸⁷⁸ Wolfgang Hager, "Germany as an Extraordinary Trader," in *West Germany: A European and Global Power* ed. Wilfred Kohl and Giorgio Basevi (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1980).; Bulmer and Paterson, "Germany and the European Union: From 'Tamed Power' to Normalized Power?," 1058-59.

Critically, however, it is within this very nexus of interests, identities, and conditions, that one recognises both elements of a Germany ostensibly committed to its civilian power role, as well as one exhibiting interests consistent with a fundamentally rationalist actor, including indifference toward a non-rationalist, identity or role concept. This dynamic serves to perplex, leading to questions regarding whether the normative identity underlying Germany's *soziale Marktwirtschaft* is still relevant, within an increasingly globalised economy and orientation.⁸⁷⁹ It similarly provokes consideration of whether a newly unified Germany, committed to trade as a fundamental interest, might portend a shift towards more traditional features of power and interest, commensurate with its economic position.⁸⁸⁰ This has, in turn, led to prominent characterisations of Germany as a *geo-economic power*, at the expense of prevailing, civilian power explanations.⁸⁸¹ In other words, at the core of such broader questions regarding German foreign policy, and in a manner that mirrors contradictions of German foreign policy toward Iran, is recognition that within German foreign economic policy, a blurring of assumed identities and interests occurs, and the extent to which policy affirms, or challenges constructivist-inspired interpretations, is often ambiguous. This dynamic is particularly recognisable in the case of contemporary German foreign policy towards Iran, in which economic features are not only at the essence of questions regarding causality and interest of Germany's policy, but also the extent to which this relationship may problematize leading assumptions of contemporary German foreign policy, which reference continuity.

Regardless of whether economic relations indicate continuity or normalisation in a general sense, for purposes of analysis in this thesis, it is important to appreciate that the evolution of German policy from the FRG's inception, to the post-unification era, reflects economic, commercial, and trade relations, as a primary source of legitimacy (domestically and internationally), identity, and interest. In this manner, and given their unambiguous existence, economic features within German foreign policy, ironically constitute the very

⁸⁷⁹ Bulmer, Jeffery, and Paterson, 2-69.; Hyde-Price, 3.

⁸⁸⁰ Bulmer, Jeffery, and Paterson, 4.; Hyde-Price, 2.; Banchoff, "German Identity and European Integration," 264.; Hellmann, "The Sirens of Power and German Foreign Policy: Who Is Listening?," 30.; "Goodbye Bismarck? The Foreign Policy of Contemporary Germany," 6.

⁸⁸¹ Hans Kundnani, "Germany as a Geo-Economic Power," *The Washington Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (2011).; Stephen Szabo, "Germany: From Civilian Power to a Geo-Economic Shaping Power," *German Politics and Society* 35, no. 3 (2017).; *Germany, Russia, and the Rise of Geo-Economics* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), 3-10.

source of many enduring debates, and contradictions, in that proponents of both continuity, and normalisation alike, choose to invoke trade and commercial relations as evidence in support of their position.

In exemplification of this dynamic, building upon Johann-Gottlieb Fichte's seminal work from *Der geschlossene Handelsstaat*,⁸⁸² Richard Rosecrance's revival of the *Handelsstaat*, or "trading state" characterisation,⁸⁸³ was interpreted as a key exemplification of how collective and historical memories engendered a German "identity" committed to pursuit of trade relations.⁸⁸⁴ With this, an identity, rather than material interest was considered by some theorists as a causality, whereby features of a *Handelsstaat*, such as disinterest in traditional power, and the necessity of an "interdependent" series of "peaceful" relations,⁸⁸⁵ appeared consistent with many civilian power assumptions, notwithstanding the intrinsically rationalist and materialist nature of most economic relationships. Further, with identity, legitimacy, and interest converging within the realm of trade, a prominent, and widely accepted characterisation by "German experts",⁸⁸⁶ that Germany is the "epitome of [...] a 'trading state'", in which "commercial and financial roles" supersede traditional power and interest,⁸⁸⁷ meant a myopic fixation on rejection of traditional, or rationalist features, provided traction for seminal civilian power theorists. Consequently, trade and economic features of contemporary German foreign policy became appropriated as evidence for civilian power proponents. This led Maull, in his seminal civilian power work, to cite Germany as a "prototype[e] of the modern trading state,"⁸⁸⁸ given a perception that "Germans today seek enjoyment from wealth not power",⁸⁸⁹ by which accumulation of wealth was somehow fundamentally about normative interests. Yet, as a consequence of the inference by Maull and others that trade is attributable to an underlying identity that rejects conventional notions of power and interest, these interpretations fail to appreciate that although a *Handelsstaat* is

⁸⁸² Johann-Gottlieb Fichte, *Der Geschlossene Handelsstaat. Ein Philosophischer Entwurf Als Anb. Zur Rechtslehre* (JG Cotta, 1800).

⁸⁸³ Richard Rosecrance, *The Rise of the Trading State: Commerce and Conquest in the Modern World*, New York, Ny (1986).

⁸⁸⁴ Crawford, 28.

⁸⁸⁵ Markovits and Reich, 48.

⁸⁸⁶ Hellmann, "Goodbye Bismarck? The Foreign Policy of Contemporary Germany," 26.

⁸⁸⁷ Gordon, 225-26.

⁸⁸⁸ Maull, 96.; Paterson, "Beyond Semi-Sovereignty: The New Germany in the New Europe," 180.

⁸⁸⁹ Markovits and Reich, 47.

peaceful in nature, the key role, or “‘Schlüsselrolle’ as a ‘trading nation’”, is the purposive “cultivati[on] [of] their economic, commercial and financial interests [...] rather than concerning themselves with [...] norms.”⁸⁹⁰ In this manner, there is a profoundly significant implication that a true trading state, is one that exhibits indifference to underlying normative considerations, given its primary function is to seek maximisation of a rationalist trade interest through material gain, rather than primarily concern itself with matters such as human rights, rule of law, or the extent to which cooperation and multilateralism should take precedence over economic interests.⁸⁹¹

In this sense, although it has been argued trading state characterisations both represent a consensus view, and capture the nature of Germany’s foreign policy⁸⁹² –including with regard to Germany’s relationship with Iran–⁸⁹³ the essence of wider debates concerning the nature of German foreign policy, nevertheless suggest a “principle role conflict”,⁸⁹⁴ by which, a Germany committed to being a prominent trading state, is not necessarily synonymous with a civilian power role.⁸⁹⁵ In turn, with unification in the early 1990s, the overarching question regarding the future of German policy and interest, featured a “core [...] question of whether the Berlin Republic will be a *Machtstaat*, *Handelsstaat*, or *Zivilmacht*”,⁸⁹⁶ as these are each, in their own way, distinct.

For purposes of analysing German-Iranian economic, commercial, and trade relations, this is a critical consideration, as it not only frames in the extent to which overlapping and contradictory characterisations of Germany’s role concepts challenge understandings of foreign policy in the Berlin Republic, but also highlights that determining whether economic relations bespeak rationalist, or materialist interests, is central to resolving similar contradictions in explaining Germany’s relations with Iran. This is why economic ties in particular are so essential to broader questions of German foreign policy toward Iran: it is the

⁸⁹⁰ Hyde-Price, 44-45.

⁸⁹¹ Szabo, *Germany, Russia, and the Rise of Geo-Economics*, 3-10.

⁸⁹² Hellmann, "Goodbye Bismarck? The Foreign Policy of Contemporary Germany," 20.; Szabo, *Germany, Russia, and the Rise of Geo-Economics*, 3-10.

⁸⁹³ Peter Rudolf and Geoffrey Kemp, "The Iranian Dilemma: Challenges for German and American Foreign Policy," (The Johns Hopkins University: American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, 1997), iv.

⁸⁹⁴ Hyde-Price, 46-47.

⁸⁹⁵ Szabo, *Germany, Russia, and the Rise of Geo-Economics*, 3-10.

⁸⁹⁶ Hyde-Price, 6.

most salient theme to provoke questions of Germany's true, underlying disposition, and the extent to which traditional, rationalist interests, serve to challenge claims that an identity committed to normative, non-rationalist interests, shapes its policy. With this in mind, before moving to analysis of the relationship itself, and bearing in mind that economic features could very well support differing interpretations of Germany's relationship with Iran –much like in a broader German foreign policy sense– it is important to expand upon the expectations of a Germany committed to civilian power interests in the cultivation of robust trade and commercial relations with Iran. Once this has been established, analysis of the relationship can easily reflect the extent to which economic ties with Iran may fundamentally challenge assumptions of contemporary German foreign policy, as encapsulated by the civilian power role concept.

5.1.1 Analytical Perspectives and Interpretation of Germany's Economic Ties with Iran

As noted previously in this thesis, the underlying basis of assumed continuity in contemporary German foreign policy as a civilian power, is predicated upon identification of a “non-rational” policy approach, attributable to “collective memory” and “ideological factors”.⁸⁹⁷ In this sense, the civilian power role concept –which is constructivist by nature– represents a counter perspective to the assumption of “material interests”⁸⁹⁸ as the aim of state action, thereby “challeng[ing] rationalist accounts” as a result.⁸⁹⁹ The implication is: for a constructivist-inspired, civilian power role concept, “ideational as well as material”⁹⁰⁰ formation of interests occurs, and material aspirations, like the maximisation of economic self-interest, cannot fully account for state interest and action, because it fails to take identity and norms into account.⁹⁰¹ As noted in the preceding section, a *Handelsstaat* exhibits indifference to normative considerations, so as to maximise trade and commercial relations, whereas in contrast, a civilian power implements “value-based foreign policy [...] [and] pursues norms even if [...]

⁸⁹⁷ Refer to chapters one and two for more detail. Markovits and Reich, 12-13.

⁸⁹⁸ Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," 37.

⁸⁹⁹ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 689.

⁹⁰⁰ Ibid., 691.

⁹⁰¹ Banchoff, "German Identity and European Integration," 260.; Struwe, 7-8.

material interests [...] would suffer".⁹⁰² Bearing this in mind, what is to be expected of a German economic relationship with Iran from each position?

In rationalist interpretations of foreign policy –such as neorealism and neoliberalism– relations bespeak aspirations of “wealth and power” within a global system of shifting “constraints”,⁹⁰³ and “behaviour represents the purposive pursuit of prosperity”.⁹⁰⁴ In fact, for realist interpretations of German foreign policy in particular, “export promotion” constitutes a central pillar of its arguments, because “the more a country exports [...] the wealthier and therefore more powerful it will be.”⁹⁰⁵ As a result, the essence of rationalist perspectives – which stand largely in ontological and epistemological contrast with civilian power assumptions– see trade and commercial relations as designed to maximise economic dividends. This means a German economic relationship with Iran featuring maximisation of economic interests as the goal itself, appears in stark contrast to the underlying assumptions of contemporary German foreign policy, as encapsulated by the civilian power role concept.

Conversely, in order to confirm civilian power assumptions in economic relations, establishing “norms [and] values [...] matter”⁹⁰⁶ in shaping economic interest is fundamental, given at the very least, for constructivists, “normative [...] interpretations” are said to “shap[e] [...] the material world” itself.⁹⁰⁷ Although a state can exhibit materialist features such as economic ties, and still be a civilian power, the civilian power understanding relies heavily upon the notion “Germany’s defined material interests are deeply influenced by Germany’s foreign policy role concept as a civilian power”,⁹⁰⁸ and economic interests are not simply about pursuit of material ends. Based upon this logic, for civilian power proponents, even if trade occurs, and Germany is indeed a “trading power”,⁹⁰⁹ such material features affirm civilian power characterisations of Germany, because “economic means” are invaluable in supplanting conventional power and interest, by achieving a nation’s goals through peaceful measures.⁹¹⁰

⁹⁰² Maull, “German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a ‘Civilian Power?’,” 16-17.

⁹⁰³ Banchoff, “German Identity and European Integration,” 263.

⁹⁰⁴ Ibid., 276.

⁹⁰⁵ Crawford, 147.

⁹⁰⁶ Harnisch and Maull, 3.

⁹⁰⁷ Adler, 322.

⁹⁰⁸ Harnisch, “Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy,” 38-39.

⁹⁰⁹ Maull, *Germany’s Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, 3.

⁹¹⁰ Maull, 92-93.

It is important, however, to recognise such logic entails specious reasoning, in that it makes a profound assumption that an *effect* of policy –i.e. peaceful means of achieving goals– is in fact proof this effect represents the overall *interest* behind such policy. In this sense, in order to truly establish that economic relations with a state such as Iran affirm civilian power interpretations, the key is to identify whether its extensive trade and commercial ties, evidence German interests existing beyond the scope of purely economic interests alone. From a civilian power perspective it is clear: “‘norms define interests’”⁹¹¹, and given “identity [...] [is] constructivism’s core explanatory concept”,⁹¹² for confidence to be established in civilian power interpretations of economic features of German foreign policy toward Iran, it must meet the constructivist standard of “pinpoint[ing] the content of state identity [...] [and] [...] demonstrate its effects.”⁹¹³ This means to establish confidence in a civilian power interpretation of Germany’s relationship, it is vital to demonstrate economic aspects of the relationship are not merely attributable to a policy aim of seeking maximisation of economic interest, but rather attributable to, secondary to, or ultimately curtailed by, elements of Germany’s norms and identity.

Now that both the significance of economic identity, legitimacy, and interest in post-war Germany, as well as the expectations of a Germany conformant to, or divergent from civilian power assumptions in its economic relationship with Iran are established, it is now possible to turn attention towards the relationship itself.

5.2 An Economic Past of German-Iranian Relations

It is helpful to appreciate, long before the unification of Germany, trade and commercial relations constituted a primary basis of interaction between successive Iranian and German governments. For Iran, Germany not only “represented a source of top-quality Western technology”,⁹¹⁴ it was a state considered to lack the very colonial legacy engendering Iranian

⁹¹¹ Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 68.

⁹¹² Banchoff, "German Identity and European Integration," 271.

⁹¹³ Ibid., 262.

⁹¹⁴ Lane, 85.

mistrust towards the West.⁹¹⁵ At the same time, in the eyes of Germany, Iran represented a prime opportunity for commercial engagement in the early 20th Century.⁹¹⁶ In this sense, “historically [...] friendly mutual opportunism” in the realm of economic ties,⁹¹⁷ featuring narratives of a non-colonial Germany, seen as indifferent to advancing Western expectations of Iran’s internal governance, meant cultivation of long-term economic engagement was acceptable to Iranian policymakers otherwise tentative to establish Western relations. As a consequence of this high-degree of trust in German intentions, a quintessentially German shaping of many elements of Iran’s economy is recognisable in modern history, such as Germany’s attribution as “founder of Persian industry”,⁹¹⁸ and German “technocrats help[ing] to establish the Iranian National Bank.”⁹¹⁹ For an Iran that has paradoxically both exhibited infatuation with, as well as apprehension towards, the West, Germany was undeniably a unique economic partner. But of critical importance, the economic engagement was a two-way street, and trade ties witnessed a meteoric ascendancy preceding the Second World War. In large part, this was driven by Germany’s substantial, long-term interest in Iranian “raw materials”,⁹²⁰ but more than that, it underscored a general ambition in the wake of World War One, “to establish its credentials as a reformed, economic power that had abandoned its former power-political ambitions.”⁹²¹ In this sense, not only was the original impetus for robust German engagement with Iran attributable to “commercial motives”,⁹²² the narratives exhibited striking similarity to contemporary characterisations of Germany’s ostensible rejection of *Machtpolitik* goals, through economic means.

Importantly, this commercial orientation was not limited to pre-war policy alone. A mere month following the FRG’s founding, economic relations with Iran were renewed,⁹²³ and by 1952, the economically oriented West Germany had already supplanted the U.S. as one of

⁹¹⁵ Mousavian, 14.; Küntzel, "Germany and a Nuclear Iran," 50.; *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 141.; Lane, 85.; Perthes, 1.

⁹¹⁶ Lane, 85.

⁹¹⁷ Ibid.

⁹¹⁸ Küntzel, "Germany and a Nuclear Iran," 50.

⁹¹⁹ Lane, 85.

⁹²⁰ Küntzel, "Germany and a Nuclear Iran," 50.; Mousavian, 15.

⁹²¹ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 23.

⁹²² Ibid., 12.

⁹²³ Ibid., 59.

Iran's preeminent trading relationships.⁹²⁴ The atrocities and horrors of the Second World War, as well as a reorientation of West Germany's interests notwithstanding, the relationship intensified economically, and narratives concerning West Germany's lack of colonial legacy continued to hold salience for Iranian policymakers such as Mohammed Mossadegh, who specifically sought German oil experts "to replace British experts" for proposed oil nationalisation, as a consequence of this understanding.⁹²⁵

Interestingly, following Mossadegh's ouster, the Shah appeared no less inclined to engage with Germany economically, and Iran emerged as Germany's second largest trade partner beyond Europe by the 1970s.⁹²⁶ The penchant for commercial engagement between prominent German firms and Iran was unambiguous, with Siemens initiating construction of major projects such as the Bushehr nuclear reactor in the 1970s,⁹²⁷ and the Shah's acquisition of a large share of German firm Friedrich Krupp.⁹²⁸ But of particular interest, is the manner in which an ostensibly civilian power FRG, was unabashed about cultivating economic ties with Iran, despite the objections of human rights groups, who took greater issue with the internal policies of Germany's beloved economic partner⁹²⁹ than German coalitions. Perhaps, in this respect, it should come as little surprise that following Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979, Germany was the only Western state inclined to maintain relations with Tehran, and despite mass executions, the strong objections of Germany's key partners in Europe and the U.S.,⁹³⁰ as well as controversy within Germany concerning Iran's use of "child soldiers" during the Iran-Iraq War,⁹³¹ the most tangible features of these sustained ties, were economic in nature.⁹³² Notwithstanding close ties to the Shah, Khomeini's regime clearly articulated a desire for continued relations with Bonn –particularly of an economic nature–⁹³³ since the

⁹²⁴ "Germany and a Nuclear Iran," 50.

⁹²⁵ *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 56-58.

⁹²⁶ Michael Wojtek, "Gut Geölte Geschäfte: Der Handel Mit Dem Arabischen Raum Steigt Seit Jahren. Die Deutsche Industrie Hofft Vor Allem Auf Iran," (Das Palament, 2016).

⁹²⁷ Lane, 85.

⁹²⁸ Ibid., 83-85.

⁹²⁹ Ibid., 85.

⁹³⁰ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 128-29.

⁹³¹ Ibid., 138.

⁹³² Ibid., ix.

⁹³³ Ibid., 127-30.; "Germany and a Nuclear Iran," 50-51.

Western state appeared both unperturbed by the new regime's actions, as well as absent the problematic colonial legacy antithetical to the Khomeini regime's narrative.⁹³⁴

Exhibiting indifference to these key, identity-based features of concern for human rights, rule of law, democratisation, and cooperation with allies, the FRG instead capitalised upon its advantage as the only Western player in town, leading Hans-Dietrich Genscher to become "the first Western official to visit Tehran".⁹³⁵ When facing criticism for the proposed visit, the Foreign Ministry made clear, according to its calculus, it would be ill-advised "to isolate regimes just because one did not agree with them, especially when the country [is] [...] a major economic partner."⁹³⁶ In this sense, the pre-unification ties were not only economic-centric, they further bespoke intent to seek maximisation of potential for rationalist aims, at the clear expense of underlying normative assumptions of contemporary German foreign policy, and identity, as a committed civilian power. However, with unification came change, and new aspects of Germany's policy served to confuse a relationship once more conspicuous for its rationalist aims, than for advancing concerns about Iran's internal state of affairs.

5.3 Early-Unification Trade with Iran and the Problematicizing of Assumptions

If pre-unification Germany appeared interested in economic engagement with Tehran, a newly unified Germany was exuberant for further intensification. Following the death of Khomeini, a new momentum for engaging Iran through economic means took shape within the European Union, and Germany in particular, aimed to expand its already robust ties, through bilateral initiatives.⁹³⁷ Yet, critically, this increased interest was in many respects, most significant for its clear divergence from U.S. policy, and as Germany endeavoured to engage Iran economically, its more unilateral and assertive policy efforts towards Iran, provoked questions of German intent.

⁹³⁴ Walter Posch, "The Third World, Global Islam and Pragmatism: The Making of Iranian Foreign Policy," *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik* (2013): 14-16.

⁹³⁵ Struwe, 15.

⁹³⁶ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 139.

⁹³⁷ Pinto, 103.; Reissner, 33.

Although U.S. policy during the Clinton and Bush eras sought to systematically ostracise Iran, and limit their room for economic engagement, Germany's efforts as "a fervent advocate of continuing [...] business relations" rather than submit to "US pressure to isolate Iran",⁹³⁸ meant the totality of Germany's relationship with Iran appeared in many respects defined by its stark differences from Washington concerning trade and commercial engagement, whether economic interest is in fact the *causality* for the contemporary relationship. The decision by Germany to seek "engagement plus trade",⁹³⁹ featuring clear "economic benefits" and considerations for Germany, and in contrast to U.S. policy, which did not,⁹⁴⁰ allowed many to infer economic interests behind relations *a priori*. This meant for some, "pragmatic considerations, that is, economic factors" were considered the real impetus for this new era of economic engagement,⁹⁴¹ rather than normative concerns. Even though this interpretation is based more upon the salience of contrasts with U.S. policy, than critical analysis of evidence, it was nevertheless further supported by the advancement of economic themed narratives, in which German policymakers lamented the "extraterritorial"⁹⁴² nature of U.S. sanctions against German firms seeking to cultivate economic ties with Iran –even resulting in threats of economic retaliation during the Kohl era, should German companies face penalty under the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA).⁹⁴³ Although these objections were hardly concrete evidence that Germany's ultimate goal was economic gain, as opposed to an *Ostpolitik* approach to diplomacy, the economic theme nevertheless began to garner credibility, and further credence was given to such narratives from U.S. and Israeli claims that German engagement with Iran merely constituted "immoral cover for maintaining lucrative commercial relations".⁹⁴⁴ In doing so, it was argued that Germany was not only undercutting the effectiveness of sanctions, but in "trading with the enemy"⁹⁴⁵ over material ambitions,⁹⁴⁶ was exhibiting indifference to normative, civilian power considerations. Even Salman Rushdie, whose receipt of an Iranian fatwa years prior had facilitated enhanced European

⁹³⁸ Pinto, 104.; Reissner, 46.; Lane, 77.

⁹³⁹ Bergenäs, 501.

⁹⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁹⁴¹ Pinto, 103.

⁹⁴² Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie, "Iran –Wirtschaftliche Beziehungen," (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie 2018).; Pinto, 104.

⁹⁴³ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 53.

⁹⁴⁴ Reissner, 34.

⁹⁴⁵ Lane, 78.

⁹⁴⁶ Küntzel, "Germany and a Nuclear Iran," 53.

engagement over Iranian behaviour, found the economic basis of interactions between Germany and Iran particularly suspect. This led him to observe: "Germany has more economic ties to Iran than any other European state. I must ask myself, why actually? Why is there this downright enthusiastic support for this regime in [Germany]?"⁹⁴⁷ In this manner, although the mere existence of economic relations does not, in and of itself, establish a high-degree of confidence that it explains the wider relationship, for Rushdie and others, the prominence of economic elements nevertheless fuelled suspicions that trade and commercial relations were, in fact, the main interests, especially given Iran was hardly the typical partner for a normatively driven Germany.

However, notwithstanding questions and harsh characterisations by one school, another school of thought, utilizing the same available evidence, has conversely interpreted economic engagement as a mere feature of wider, non-economic interests, in which German policy not only seeks moderation and reform in Iran,⁹⁴⁸ but in doing so, allows the normative interests of a civilian power to meaningfully shape its relationship. The result is a profound contradiction in views, with clear potential for problematizing wider assumptions of German foreign policy. Thus, as established in the section concerning general German foreign economic policy, one sees the essence of ongoing debates regarding this relationship mirroring a wider question of whether economic ties are the interest, in and of itself, or a mere catalyst for non-rationalist aims. Yet, helpfully, in doing so, these existing debates offer a clear means of resolving this dichotomy. Rather than premise analysis of this relationship upon suspicions rooted in the relationship's uniqueness and occurrence with economic features, or the bias of confirming pre-existing assumptions –as existing interpretations have largely done– it is important to ask: what do the actual developments and narratives concerning economic features of this relationship truly evidence, when viewed from the perspective of constructivist-inspired, civilian power assumptions underlying contemporary German foreign policy?

5.3.1 German Eagerness and a Unique Valuation of Ties

⁹⁴⁷ Martin Doerry and Volker Hage, "In Uns Allen Ist Gewalt," *Der Spiegel*, 22.01.1996 1996.

⁹⁴⁸ Kaussler, "European Union Constructive Engagement with Iran (2000–2004): An Exercise in Conditional Human Rights Diplomacy," 273.; Struwe, 4.; Lane, 78.; Reissner, 36-37.; Council.

To this question, it might appear problematic that a unified Germany wasted little time in pursuing a new level of relations. The bilateral “German-Iranian economic commission” met for the first time since the 1979 Islamic Revolution in 1991, featuring not only representatives of prominent German firms, but key German officials, including Economics Minister Jürgen Möllemann.⁹⁴⁹ The symbolic implication was that policymakers and business elites alike, eagerly awaited opportunities for economic engagement in the forthcoming years, and consistent with the corporatist tradition of post-war German foreign economic policy, industry was closely intertwined with Kohl’s collation,⁹⁵⁰ leading German firms in Iran to convey excitement.⁹⁵¹ However, critically, German policymakers were hardly passive regarding private sector interests in Iran, and instead of merely taking a position of non-interference concerning such interests, it was, in fact, the government itself that actively encouraged a deepening of economic links, by extending “the highest level of Hermes insurance cover”, of all its economic partners, to Iranian trade.⁹⁵² In doing so, German firms otherwise hesitant to consider business opportunities in Iran, had a clear sense the government was more than supportive of their efforts, and prominent German companies such as “Siemens [...] Krupp, Daimler-Benz”⁹⁵³ as well as Volkswagen,⁹⁵⁴ sought to make further inroads. As a result of this shared public-private interest, nearly 200 German firms were engaged in Iranian business by 1997,⁹⁵⁵ and Germany not only became Iran’s largest trading partner quantitatively speaking, in the immediacy of unification,⁹⁵⁶ but it was considered preferential to “other Western countries” by Iranian policymakers for “traditional reasons”.⁹⁵⁷

With these factors combined, German exports that amounted to 2.5 billion DM in 1989, experienced a meteoric increase to 7.9 billion DM by 1992.⁹⁵⁸ It is further revealing to note, that in addition to trade itself, economic interests appeared to deepen in other realms as well,

⁹⁴⁹ Mousavian, 49-50.

⁹⁵⁰ Lane, 82.

⁹⁵¹ Reissner, 36.

⁹⁵² Mousavian, 51.

⁹⁵³ Lane, 82.

⁹⁵⁴ Halevi.

⁹⁵⁵ Rudolf and Kemp, 4.

⁹⁵⁶ Lane, 78.; Struwe, 30-31.; Reissner, 36.; Küntzel, "Germany and a Nuclear Iran," 50.

⁹⁵⁷ Mousavian, 50.

⁹⁵⁸ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 154-55.

as Germany became the “main external creditor”, and Iranian debt owed Berlin approximated “\$8.6 billion” in the early 1990s.⁹⁵⁹ Given the significant financial costs of reunification facing Kohl at this time,⁹⁶⁰ repayment on such debts, combined with new trade and commercial opportunities in Iran, meant the economic implications of failed Iranian ties were not without consequence.

In this manner, economic considerations emerged not only as a key feature of Germany’s dialogue policy, but such commercial interests further constituted a central aim of relations themselves, even if secondary to other interests.⁹⁶¹ Yet, most importantly for purposes of this chapter, is recognizing the manner in which such interests occurred at the expense of civilian power assumptions. As established in the preceding two chapters, it is assumed a Germany committed to civilian power interests in its foreign policy toward Iran, would exhibit a commitment to cooperation and multilateralism, as well as seek to affirm a promotion of democracy, human rights, and rule of law, while not engaging with an autocratic state’s hardliners. Despite these assumptions, it is revealing to consider policy statements and existing analyses alike, indicate post-unification German economic policy towards Iran, demonstrates both a clear bilateral basis of engagement,⁹⁶² and per the preceding chapter, occurs despite an assumed prioritisation of human rights, including alleged contingency upon progress.⁹⁶³ As a result, it is of profound significance for this thesis, that early dialogue with Iran “was most prominent in the area of trade and investments”,⁹⁶⁴ and featured a Germany unwilling to leverage economic ties for realisation of non-economic goals,⁹⁶⁵ as this would appear to significantly downgrade confidence in civilian power aims, through an economic catalyst.

Yet, for proponents of a normatively-driven Germany in its Iran relations, despite challenges at times, a reduction in German trade flows during the 1990s was attributable to “EU [...]

⁹⁵⁹ Pinto, 104-05.

⁹⁶⁰ Lane, 82.

⁹⁶¹ Reissner, 47-48.

⁹⁶² Struwe, 5-23.; Reissner, 40.; Bundestag, "Iranische Abgeordnete Im Bundestag: Signal Des Neubeginns.";

⁹⁶³ Kaussler, "European Union Constructive Engagement with Iran (2000–2004): An Exercise in Conditional Human Rights Diplomacy," 273.; Struwe, 11-12.; Council.

⁹⁶⁴ Bergenäs, 502.

⁹⁶⁵ Reissner, 34-43.

improvements [...] in Iran's human rights record as a precondition for closer economic ties", and a general willingness to bow to U.S. pressure.⁹⁶⁶ For these interpretations, one of the most compelling pieces of evidence, is that relatively speaking, these "economic interests are not paramount",⁹⁶⁷ and given German policy documents even state its economic ties with Iran are "not particularly large",⁹⁶⁸ this would imply trade is too miniscule to possibly account for Germany's interest.⁹⁶⁹ On the surface, this argument is fairly convincing, as it begs the question as to why a Germany driven by maximisation of economic interests would risk its more valuable economic relationship with the U.S. over ties that even during a particularly robust trade year of 2006, still amounted to "less than half of one percent" of Germany's overall trade.⁹⁷⁰

However, although in a relative sense these economic relations are insignificant, this is again, specious reasoning. In truth, relative inconsequentiality of trade flows does not conclusively evidence disinterest in economic goals. Accordingly, and of great importance, regardless of validity, this interpretation highlights how existing analyses are overly reliant upon interpreting relations within a predetermined set of assumptions, rather than objectively approach the broader economic complexities surrounding the relationship, as well as the unique value German policymakers place upon Iran. In fact, despite a decline in trade with Iran, and the relatively small fraction it represents, German policy documents explicitly note "intensification" of trade during the mid-1990s remained an interest of both sides,⁹⁷¹ regardless of ongoing human rights concerns. The document not only explicitly rejects the U.S. sanctions-based approach that some advocates of a non-economic interpretation have cited as a reason for Germany's reduction of trade in the mid-1990s, but further, it attributes the decline in question to an ongoing economic crisis in Iran, rather than a change in policy, or reflection of disinterest.⁹⁷² In other words, the decline in trade cited as crucial evidence in

⁹⁶⁶ Struwe, 30-31.; Rudolf and Kemp, 3-4.

⁹⁶⁷ 3-4.

⁹⁶⁸ Die Bundesregierung, "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Die Europäisch-Iranische Handelsbank Und Die Deutsche Handelspolitik Gegenüber Dem Iran," (Deutscher Bundestag, 2011), 8.

⁹⁶⁹ Mousavian, 201.; Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 174.; Rudolf and Kemp, 3-4.

⁹⁷⁰ Georgina Jones, "Germany's Pivotal Role in the Iranian Nuclear Standoff," in *Proliferation Analysis* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007).

⁹⁷¹ Bundesregierung, "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Drucksache 13/3483," 1.

⁹⁷² Ibid., 1-2.

support of normative interpretations of Germany's Iran policy, is in fact, merely a misinterpretation of economic circumstances taking place within Iran,⁹⁷³ and is factually unrelated to Germany's policy.

This point is further demonstrated by the fact that although it was noted German trade bottomed out in 1996, and therefore implied "economic interests are not paramount,"⁹⁷⁴ German exports to Iran rebounded to the highest level since 1993 the following year,⁹⁷⁵ and despite U.S. passage of the ILSA in 1996, German trade increased following its implementation.⁹⁷⁶ Bearing these facts in mind, it is fallacious to infer German disinterest from this decline, or to attribute it to a shift in policy positions. What the policy narrative and trade flows cited in these claims do, however, critically evidence, is a German interest in seeing economic ties expand in the future from the relatively miniscule numbers at present, thereby increasing the possibility that notwithstanding Iran's small role in German trade policy at the time, long-term valuation of the relationship is not adequately captured by numbers alone, and the factors behind this valuation may occur with indifference to the normative considerations of a committed civilian power.

Importantly, the narrative surrounding private sector interest supports this potential explanation, with German investors elated throughout the 1990s to see continuation and expansion of ties in the forthcoming years—even following the Mykonos ruling.⁹⁷⁷ Meanwhile, the German government demonstrated its own commitment towards this interest, through active efforts both to "happily reschedule[e] the debt" Iran owed them when necessary, and despite growing controversy regarding the coalition's engagement with Iranian government officials suspected of human rights abuses,⁹⁷⁸ to consistently extend Hermes guarantees at crucial junctures. This included Hermes guarantees of 150 million DM in 1995 "to revitalise economic relations", despite U.S. and Israeli objections, and amidst an alleged decline in German interest.⁹⁷⁹ More importantly, these did not occur as discrete instances of German

⁹⁷³ Reissner, 38.; Lane, 82.

⁹⁷⁴ Rudolf and Kemp, 3.

⁹⁷⁵ Perthes, 5.

⁹⁷⁶ Bergenäs, 501.

⁹⁷⁷ Reissner, 39.; Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 177.

⁹⁷⁸ Reissner, 39.

⁹⁷⁹ Struwe, 31.

policy, but represented a trend, with another Hermes cover of 200 million DM in 2000 immediately following a human rights crackdown.⁹⁸⁰

In this sense, it is interesting to recognise, the initial years of economic relations in Germany's dialogue, set the tone and precedent for economic relations in future years. And notwithstanding changes in coalitions, trade and commercial relations that appeared to come at the expense of civilian power assumptions of Germany, nevertheless continued to entice strong interest from German policymakers, long after Kohl's departure from the Chancellery. In fact, despite occasional criticism, or calls for cessation –particularly from parties on the political left– all mainstream German parties, including many within the Greens, nevertheless accepted economic relations with Iran as positive, albeit for differing reasons.⁹⁸¹ This is not only well evidenced by the relative continuity in policy, but comments from the likes of Joschka Fischer, who both noted the Berlin Republic “is amongst Iran's most important trading partners”, and that economic relations between the two nations is “without a doubt a positive factor,” in further expressing Germany's desire to see a “deepened collaboration in [the] business-technological area.”⁹⁸²

Bearing this perspective in mind, it comes as little surprise that despite a contentious decline of trade in the 1990s, in the early 2000s, German exports to Iran increased to the highest levels since the early 1990s,⁹⁸³ and statistics provided to the *Bundestag* indicate that by 2006, German exports to Iran had nearly tripled since the year 2000.⁹⁸⁴ The message was clear: for Germany, economic relations were not only a consistent feature of interest, they were conceived in terms of future possibilities and potential, as much as, if not more than, their current state. In this sense, it is critical to understand, despite contentions that quantitatively low trade bespeaks disinterest, narratives and actions alike demonstrate the essence of Germany's trade interest during the 1990s onwards, exceeds expected value. This dynamic is

⁹⁸⁰ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 180.

⁹⁸¹ Ibid., 151-52.; Mousavian, 105.

⁹⁸² Joschka Fischer, "Rede Des Bundesministers Des Auswärtigen, Joschka Fischer, Zur Eröffnung Der Neuen Botschaft Der Islamischen Republik Iran Am 16. Februar 2005 in Berlin," (Berlin: Die Bundesregierung, 2005).

⁹⁸³ Perthes, 5.

⁹⁸⁴ Die Bundesregierung, "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Das Iranische Atomprogramm Und Die Verhängung Von Sanktionen Seitens Der Eu Gegen Den Iran," (Deutscher Bundestag, 2010), 11.

particularly recognisable in the manner in which Germany did not exhibit true economic contingency upon progress in human rights and political moderation, or feature a cooperative attitude in its relations, thereby downgrading confidence in civilian power assumptions, while upgrading confidence in an economic causality for the relationship. After all, if inconsequential economic relations are said to evidence disinterest in goals beyond a normative realm, would the marginalisation of normative interests by inconsequential economic ties not accordingly trivialise the norms and identity said to be affirmed by this?

Taking this into consideration, what analysis of early-unification economic relations with Iran indicates, is a clear necessity of determining the underlying rationale of Germany's unique, long-term valuation of economic relations with Iran. This is essential, so as to determine conclusively, if its long-term goals, indeed, demonstrate a Germany driven by economic end goals, or ones in which its commitment to economic aspects of the relationship, is merely a catalyst for non-economic interests, only realised through long-term economic engagement.

5.4 Banking, Finance, and a Narrative of German Interest

To this point, although banking and finance might not constitute a long-term interest per se, it does represent one of the most prominent and consistent features of long-term economic ties between the two nations, albeit one that existing literature has largely ignored the significance of. Indeed, part of this disregard reflects a lack of available data on the subject. Nevertheless, analysis regarding banking and finance in this relationship is of particular importance, given that while the Western world demonstrated an aversion to facilitating Iranian financial transactions, Germany, on the other hand, because of its subjective valuation, maintained numerous banking ties. It emerged as the only Western state willing to reschedule debts, and even expressed a desire to extend Hermes insurance covers for trade.⁹⁸⁵ This, in turn, implies that analysis of banking and finance can help to further illuminate a value not necessarily captured by trade flows alone, but which captures the long-term interests Germany seeks to realise through its distinctive ties. But what do the narratives and actions indicate?

⁹⁸⁵ Mousavian, 127-28.

In one prominent respect, the uniqueness of Germany's banking and finance ties with Iran have served to engender particularly strong criticism from the U.S. –which implored Germany to stop such transactions—⁹⁸⁶ and allegedly led officials from Washington to visit Germany, “to pressure politicians and businessmen” alike.⁹⁸⁷ Yet, critically, notwithstanding strong pressure from a partner central to Germany's cooperative identity as a civilian power,⁹⁸⁸ it is insightful to consider that German policy documents explicitly state, preserving “intensive dialogue with [...] German [...] business” as well as “close and faithful dialogue with the German financial community” regarding Iran,⁹⁸⁹ remains a key consideration of its policy. In this sense, banking and finance intersections between Germany and Iran are particularly instrumental for substantiating a German preoccupation with business interests in the context of policy vis-à-vis Iran.

In one prominent case, U.S. officials sanctioned the “European-Iranian Trade Bank” –located in Germany– for illicit activities, including those allegedly related to nuclear proliferation efforts.⁹⁹⁰ However, notwithstanding a “blacklisting” by U.S. officials,⁹⁹¹ German policy statements underscored a willingness to allow this Iranian bank to continue its activities on German soil, because as “one of the few remaining financial facilities for Iranian business in Germany and Europe”, the bank has “steadily increased in importance”.⁹⁹² In this manner, a German willingness in this case to reject sanctions, and allow the bank's continued operation, was largely attributable to a calculus of economic opportunism. This point is captured well by the additional articulation within the document, that “further sanctions will further shrink German-Iranian trade”, in a broader context.⁹⁹³ For German policymakers, what ultimately shaped their policy in this case, was not merely a unique, and financially beneficial

⁹⁸⁶ Jones.; Steven Weisman, "U.S. Asks Finance Chiefs to Limit Iran's Access to Banks," *The New York Times* 2006.; Belkin, 13.

⁹⁸⁷ Jones.

⁹⁸⁸ See chapter three for explication of this.

⁹⁸⁹ Die Bundesregierung, "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Haltung Der Bundesregierung Zu Wirtschaftssanktionen Gegenüber Dem Iran Und Deren Auswirkung Auf Deutsche Unternehmen," (Deutscher Bundestag, 2008), 1-2.

⁹⁹⁰ David Crawford and Peter Fritsch, "Small Bank in Germany Tied to Iran Nuclear Effort," *The Wall Street Journal*, July 18, 2010 2010.

⁹⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹⁹² Bundesregierung, "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Die Europäisch-Iranische Handelsbank Und Die Deutsche Handelspolitik Gegenüber Dem Iran," 1.

⁹⁹³ Ibid., 8.

opportunity in the banking sector to capitalise upon, but a further association that robust banking and finance ties were instrumental to a wider realisation of rationalist interests, in the form of trade.

This is similarly recognisable in statements by the former German Ambassador to the United Nations, in which a rejection of sanctions was presented as attributable to the desire “not [...] to hurt our small- and medium-sized enterprises”.⁹⁹⁴ Accordingly, in contrast with U.S. policy, it is vital to recognise that German policy statements expressly note, Germany’s willingness to support a freezing of assets from a financial institution would only occur if in relation to nuclear proliferation, terrorism, or the illegal weapons trade.⁹⁹⁵ Furthermore, the burden of proof for Germany is exceptionally high in this regard, whereby, according to a spokesperson for the German Economics Ministry, “the prerequisite [...] is concrete evidence of participation by the person or entity”.⁹⁹⁶ In doing so, the high burden of proof bespeaks a determination to avoid as many limitations or constraints to economic interests as possible. This sentiment is further captured by Germany’s clear resentment towards unilateral attempts to hinder financial transactions between Germany and Iran, as indicated by the additional, and pointed criterion that even if such evidence existed, the “U.N. Security Council –not the U.S. – sets the standard by which Germany imposes sanctions on Iranian banks operating in Germany”.⁹⁹⁷ In responding this way, the narrative captures a German government strikingly perturbed by attempts to counter its ambitions in the Iranian economic sphere.

With Germany responding as such, U.S. policy efforts shifted towards German banks engaging in business with Iran themselves,⁹⁹⁸ rather than attempt to persuade German policymakers to change their ways. As a consequence of this shift, Deutsche Bank, among others, severed ties with Iranian firms and entities, fearing much greater implications for their bottom line than passing up opportunities with Iran.⁹⁹⁹ For such banks and financial institutions, the calculus was obvious, and captured well by U.S. Senator Tom Cotton’s

⁹⁹⁴ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 232.

⁹⁹⁵ Bundestag, “Iran: Teherans Hegemoniale Und Nukleare Interessen Und Die Haltung Der Internationalen Gemeinschaft,” 14.

⁹⁹⁶ Crawford and Fritsch.

⁹⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁹⁸ Jones.

⁹⁹⁹ Crawford and Fritsch.; Jones.

comment, that “countries have to make a decision [...] do they want to deal with the United States’ \$19 trillion economy, or do they want to deal with Iran’s economy [...] about the size of Maryland?”¹⁰⁰⁰ Given this choice, businesses often elected not to engage in Iranian business. Yet, insightfully for purposes of this thesis, while individual German firms may have been deterred as a result of U.S. policy, the narrative indicates German policymakers nevertheless remained determined to see continuation of ties despite this ultimatum, as well as increasingly preoccupied with the manner in which U.S. policy had profoundly economic implications for Berlin’s subjective interests.

In exemplification of this, German documents note an interpretation that reluctance to engage in business with Iran is a consequence of “Western banks bowing to the pressure of America”,¹⁰⁰¹ further implying and lamenting perceived coercion of German banks.¹⁰⁰² In doing so, the narrative emphasises that severing of ties is contrary to the German government’s position and interest of seeing economic relations occur without hindrance, as well as inconsistent with natural business calculation. In this sense, it is particularly critical to appreciate such evidence strongly indicates Germany’s economic policy towards Iran is not attributable to business influence on government policy, but rather, demonstrates such transactions largely occur as a result of endogenous government efforts to encourage trade with Iran. This dynamic is recognisable in coalition efforts throughout the post-unification era to actively incentivise German firms’ engagement with Iran, both by “reassuring companies and banks [...] they have political support”,¹⁰⁰³ as well as mitigating financial risks of investment through Hermes insurance and export credits.¹⁰⁰⁴ In doing so, efforts to reassure evidence a German government not merely assuming a position of non-interference in the private sector, but rather one of coaxing businesses to trade with Iran.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Karen DeYoung and Carol Morello, "Trump's Decision on Iran Nuclear Deal Could Cause Major Breach with Allies in Europe," *The Washington Post*, October 5, 2017 2017.

¹⁰⁰¹ Bundestag, "Iran: Teherans Hegemoniale Und Nukleare Interessen Und Die Haltung Der Internationalen Gemeinschaft," 14.

¹⁰⁰² Bundesregierung, "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Haltung Der Bundesregierung Zu Wirtschaftssanktionen Gegenüber Dem Iran Und Deren Auswirkung Auf Deutsche Unternehmen," 1.

¹⁰⁰³ Erin Cunningham, "Europe Helped Draft the Iran Nuclear Deal. Now Leaders Are Trying to Save It," *The Washington Post*, October 6, 2017 2017.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Jones.

Insightfully, German policymakers are unabashed about this strategy, leading then German Economics Minister Brigitte Zypries to publicly proclaim in the wake of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA): “I deploy myself [on behalf of the coalition] for [...] financing projects” in Iran.¹⁰⁰⁵ In this sense, there is undeniably an interest underlying the German government’s encouragement of German banks and firms to engage. However, this returns to the overarching question: what does this interest in economic ties with Iran actually bespeak? Helpfully, analysis of post-JCPOA discourse is particularly illuminating, regarding how a decision by Germany to go beyond mere encouragement, further suggests a possible economic explanation itself.

5.4.1 It’s Not About Being Loved, It’s About Billions Lost

As stated in official documents, not only did “Germany [...] awai[t] a market worth billions” in Iran following the JCPOA, it did so vis-à-vis a country which, according to then German Business Minister Sigmar Gabriel, has a “long tradition of [...] business relations [...] even during sanctions”.¹⁰⁰⁶ In this sense, the official narrative is almost boastful, as well as defiant of perceived interference in Germany’s ties, but in particular, it is one explicitly invoking desired gains through long-term economic and financial engagement, rather than valuation existing in the present. German businesses were particularly excited to see realisation of trade and commercial opportunities, and it appeared a possible lifting of sanctions would allow for Germany to pursue a maximisation of desired economic engagement.¹⁰⁰⁷ However, amidst uncertainty regarding sanctions removal, statements from Gabriel focused in particular upon enduring “problems with the banking sector” due to “unilateral sanctions”, which he protested, “have nothing to do with the nuclear agreement”.¹⁰⁰⁸ Brigitte Zypries similarly noted in the context of JCPOA uncertainty, that for Germany, a desired intensification of

¹⁰⁰⁵ Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie, “Zypries Trifft Iranischen Verkehrsminister,” news release, July 27, 2017, 2017, <https://www.bmwi.de/Redaktion/DE/Pressemitteilungen/2017/20170727-zypries-trifft-iranischen-verkehrsminister.html>.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Nelles and Gathmann.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Christopher Alessi, “German Businesses Blame U.S. For Iran Trade Disappointment,” *The Wall Street Journal*, August 31, 2016 2016.; “Small German Firms Hold Edge in Iran,” *The Wall Street Journal*, December 1, 2015 2015.; Tobias Kaiser, “Deutschland Hat Im Iran Einen Entscheidenden Vorteil,” *Die Welt*, July 19, 2015 2015.; “Donald Trump’s Threats Cast Shadow over Europe-Iran Forum,” *Deutsche Welle*, October 4, 2017 2017.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Nelles and Gathmann.

economic ties existed,¹⁰⁰⁹ thereby making clear from a narrative standpoint, Germany's concern over the JCPOA, and economic interests, are not unrelated.

Critically, in this regard, for German policymakers like Gabriel and Zypries, although the eventual U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA held broader implications for myriad aspects of Germany's relations with Iran, including diplomacy, the issue nevertheless appeared framed and criticised in undeniably financial terms. This led to German complaints that such a withdrawal would only worsen the situation further, given "they [the U.S.] already hinder [...] corporations and banks' business with Iran".¹⁰¹⁰ In late 2017, this position was similarly voiced by then German Ambassador to the United States, Peter Wittig, who lamented above all, concerning a forthcoming JCPOA withdrawal by Washington, that "German companies have suffered billions and billions and billions of dollars".¹⁰¹¹ Notwithstanding Wittig's further contention that economic relations can serve to moderate Iranian behaviour in a broader sense,¹⁰¹² the narrative is nevertheless focused as much upon the seemingly rationalist implication of lost monetary potential, as it did upon Germany's other espoused interests, including the ability for trade and commercial relations to facilitate non-economic aims.

Taking into consideration that Sigmar Gabriel previously articulated a position that Germany's business dialogue was both necessary, and critically, "not about [being] loved [...] it's about German [...] interests",¹⁰¹³ a primary fixation upon unrealised economic potential within the narrative upgrades confidence that Germany's interest in economic relations, occurs for purely economic goals. In this manner, the narrative surrounding banking and finance is particularly illuminating, in that it captures a Germany exhibiting a profoundly rationalist, and materialist preoccupation with the economic implications of stymied banking and finance, despite the ostensible civilian power commitment to ensure rationalist, and materialist interests are at least secondary, or subservient, to those of a normative basis.¹⁰¹⁴ In

¹⁰⁰⁹ Jefferson Chase, "German, Iranian Foreign Ministers: Iran Nuclear Deal Must Stay," *Deutsche Welle*, June 27, 2017 2017.

¹⁰¹⁰ Andreas Ross, "Atomabkommen: Mit Iran Gegen Trump," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 21, 2017 2017.

¹⁰¹¹ Harris.

¹⁰¹² Ibid.

¹⁰¹³ Nelles and Gathmann.

¹⁰¹⁴ Refer to chapters one, two, and four.

doing so, this upgrades confidence that long-term interests facilitated through Germany's unique banking and finance ties with Iran, can in fact, account for Germany's interest in the relationship. But taking into account that banking and finance are merely a *feature* of the long-term interests themselves, this begs the question: what are the specific long-term economic interests leading Germany to lament an inability to conduct unrestrained transactions with Iran? And what do these inform about whether Germany's interests are in fact, economic in nature, or ultimately, curbed by Germany's identity and interest as a civilian power?

5.5 Fuelling an Economic Giant Provides Further Opportunities

Bearing these questions in mind, it is helpful to consider another, more tangible manifestation of Germany's desired economic transactions with Iran: energy resources. Despite its impressive capacity to manufacture, Germany is, in fact, "highly dependent" upon acquiring "raw materials, particularly energy" from others.¹⁰¹⁵ It is this very dependency that led to a historic espousal of "justification for aggressive expansion",¹⁰¹⁶ within Germany's *Machtpolitik* past, and in this regard, for a Germany committed to sustaining its economic vitality, an ability to acquire, as well as diversify energy imports, is a natural, rationalist consideration. Even civilian power proponents of German foreign economic policy have conceded energy remains central to security of the German economy, meaning a "competitive market on the supply side" remains a best-case scenario.¹⁰¹⁷ Given this relative insecurity about fuelling its economic prowess, it comes as little surprise that according to German policy statements, "alongside [...] environmentally sound energy supply, security of supply is [...] [a] key [...] objective"¹⁰¹⁸ in policy.

For Germany and its European allies, the 1973 oil crisis served to impress upon them, in a most serious manner, that long-term strategy was needed, given oil and energy resources now

¹⁰¹⁵ Crawford, 44.

¹⁰¹⁶ Ibid., 45.

¹⁰¹⁷ Maull, *Germany's Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, 169-71.

¹⁰¹⁸ Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie, "Security of Supply: Monitoring the Security of Supply," (2018).

constituted a means of political leverage.¹⁰¹⁹ In this manner, “German policy increasingly reflected its dependence on Arab states”,¹⁰²⁰ whereby energy policy not only represented a key feature of foreign economic policy, it fundamentally shaped policy, as if it constituted a rationalist and material interest itself. Insightfully, central to Germany’s policy of establishing security of supply, was identification of countries willing to provide energy when others would not, so as to ensure appropriate diversification. Iran, as it so happens, was one of them, both imploring the Arab states to end the 1973 embargo,¹⁰²¹ while striving to “increase [its] production” during the crisis.¹⁰²² Consequently, despite being a member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Iran was nevertheless independent at the time when it came to its politicisation of energy resources, and this did not escape notice by German policymakers.

According to data from the World Bank, Iran currently possesses the second largest natural gas reserves, as well as the fourth largest proven oil reserves,¹⁰²³ meaning Iran is a very appealing choice in terms of developing a strategic partner for energy security. The Berlin Republic has faced an “especially fragile”¹⁰²⁴ reliance upon a Russian monopoly of natural gas,¹⁰²⁵ whereby the inability to diversify away from Russia could limit its policy options when dealing with Moscow. Cognizant of this dynamic, to address “growing demand without increasing dependency on Russia”, Germany has actively sought alternatives.¹⁰²⁶ Critically, German policy statements explicitly reference “Iran after Russia” as the leading natural gas reserve option,¹⁰²⁷ and have similarly underscored a preeminent desire to collaborate on

¹⁰¹⁹ Rory Miller, *Inglorious Disarray: Europe, Israel and the Palestinians since 1967* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).; *Desert Kingdoms to Global Powers: The Rise of the Arab Gulf* (Yale University Press, 2016), 20-22.; Maull, *Germany's Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, 170.

¹⁰²⁰ Belkin, 3.

¹⁰²¹ Bernard Weinraub, "Shah of Iran Urges Arabs to End Their Oil Embargo," *The New York Times*, December 22, 1973 1973.

¹⁰²² Miller, *Desert Kingdoms to Global Powers: The Rise of the Arab Gulf*, 20-22.

¹⁰²³ The World Bank, "Overview –Iran," (The World Bank 2018).

¹⁰²⁴ Maull, *Germany's Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, 172-75.

¹⁰²⁵ Jens Hobohm, "Energy," in *German Middle East and North Africa Policy*, ed. Guido Steinberg (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik 2009), 59.; The Economist, "Germany's Energy Mix: Getting out of Gas, Germany's Reliance on Russian Gas Is Falling," *The Economist*, September 26, 2014 2014.; Judy Dempsey, "Germany's Ambiguity toward Russia and Energy Security," in *Strategic Europe*, ed. Judy Dempsey (Carnegie Europe, 2015).; Maull, *Germany's Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, 172-78.

¹⁰²⁶ Werenfels, 8.

¹⁰²⁷ Bundestag, "Iran: Teherans Hegemoniale Und Nukleare Interessen Und Die Haltung Der Internationalen Gemeinschaft," 6.

energy.¹⁰²⁸ Accordingly, mirroring the narrative of policymakers and government offices, energy has emerged as a prominent aspect of post-unification economic ties between the two countries, leading to the signing of prominent energy agreements in the early 1990s.¹⁰²⁹ For some, “energy security” remains one of “three decisive interests” of Germany’s overall regional policy,¹⁰³⁰ and in this manner, many scholars interpret oil and gas as a leading policy interest of Germany vis-à-vis Iran.¹⁰³¹

Nevertheless, others counter that despite the existence of such an interest, “German firms do not have substantial [...] investment in the Iranian energy sector”,¹⁰³² thereby implying once again, that quantitative data disproves such rationalist, and materialist interests of policy toward Iran. But here again, analysis indicates accurate valuation may exist in terms beyond present numbers, and reflects long-term valuation, based upon potential growth. In exemplification of this, much of the interest German firms place on economic ties with Tehran is predicated upon the hope Iran can “develop as an anchor of stability”,¹⁰³³ and when it comes to the energy sector, projects such as the development of liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals, and overland pipelines for improving supply routes, are conceptualised in terms of “decades”.¹⁰³⁴ The interest on both sides for energy relations is palpable, with the likes of ex-Chancellor Gerhard Schröder visiting Iran in 2009 to discuss natural gas opportunities, concurrent to statements by Iranian Oil Minister Gholan-Hosseini Nozar, “advocate[ing] a strategic German-Iranian alliance, with Iran supplying the natural gas and Germany the technology”.¹⁰³⁵ Yet, imperatively, and related to such comments from the Iranian side, although the “longer term Iranian oil and gas resources will have an important role [...] for [...] German energy supplies”, this will necessitate “long planning and construction periods.”¹⁰³⁶

¹⁰²⁸ Energie, “Iran –Wirtschaftliche Beziehungen.”; Wojtek.

¹⁰²⁹ Bergenäs, 501.

¹⁰³⁰ Asseburg, 23.

¹⁰³¹ Pinto, 109.; Struwe, 44.; Bergenäs, 501.; Küntzel, “Germany and a Nuclear Iran,” 50.

¹⁰³² Rudolf and Kemp, 4.; Jones.

¹⁰³³ Wojtek.

¹⁰³⁴ Hobohm, 60.

¹⁰³⁵ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 242-43.

¹⁰³⁶ Reissner, 47.

Accordingly, and most critically, central to the very realisation of Germany's long-term energy plans regarding Iran, is another, in some respects, even greater economic opportunity for Germany: that modernisation of Iran's energy-related infrastructure is required, both to "increase delivery volume", as well as "lower production costs",¹⁰³⁷ creating a very real, and quite sizeable demand for German firms in particular.¹⁰³⁸ In this sense, even if long-term energy interests are somewhat intangible in the present, and Germany continues to reduce its dependency on fossil fuels in the long-term as it has stated,¹⁰³⁹ analysis of the energy sector both confirms a Germany conceptualizing its economic valuation of Iran in terms of future growth, more than present numbers, as well as a Germany appearing to possess a substantial economic opportunity in the present, by facilitating Iran's modernisation efforts through collaboration and commercial relations. Bearing in mind this opportunity exists, presupposing economic, commercial, and trade relations constitute the preeminent explanation of Germany's post-unification relationship with Iran, one would, in turn, expect Germany to seize the opportunity created by exporting and collaborating on matters of technology and modernisation. But to what extent does Germany capitalise upon the economic opportunity of exporting technology and goods? And if so, does Germany ever appear to curb these interests based upon its identity, and interest as a civilian power, or does it merely seek maximisation of these seemingly rationalist and materialist interests?

5.6 Trade in Technology and Expertise

In order to establish confidence in economic interests as the *sole* explanation of German foreign policy toward Iran, it remains essential to demonstrate that Germany, above all, seeks to capitalise upon its potential, and interest in this realm. But to what extent is an economic relationship fully embraced? And what, if any limitations to Germany's economic interest exist? To answer these questions, analysis of trade in technology and expertise is particularly illuminating, given the opportunity for Germany to trade in technology and knowhow with Iran remains highly lucrative. For example, taking into consideration the preceding section, it has long been noted that should sanctions against Iran be lifted, the demand for capable

¹⁰³⁷ Wojtek.

¹⁰³⁸ Ibid.; Kaiser.

¹⁰³⁹ Economist.

“international” firms to modernise and enlarge Iran’s “energy infrastructure”, with competitive technologies, will be sizeable.¹⁰⁴⁰ Imperatively, however, the economic opportunity created for Germany through Iranian modernisation needs, extends well beyond the scope of the energy sector alone.

On the one hand, the energy sector is emblematic of German interest in Iran that is long-term by nature, but it is similarly but a single component of a broader German opportunity, present throughout a myriad of Iranian economic sectors. Beginning around the time of German unification, Iran sought to undertake “billions of dollars in modernisation and reconstruction” efforts following the Iran-Iraq War, and German firms, including Siemens and Krupp, emerged as key players for realisation of this initiative, through transference of German technology and knowhow.¹⁰⁴¹ Indeed, the revitalisation of commercial relations was natural, in that it represented the continuation of a long-legacy of industrial modernisation and training¹⁰⁴² –with some even positing Germany is the “real founder of [...] Persian industry”–¹⁰⁴³ but in reality, more than anything, Germany represented a vital relationship Iranian industry not only favoured, but frankly needed to fulfil its desired economic growth.

As Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif put it: “made in Germany [...] has particularly great meaning” in Iran.¹⁰⁴⁴ For one, Germany is considered by Iranian consumers as the best source of imports,¹⁰⁴⁵ with current Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei even noted to favour Germany’s BMW when it comes to automobiles.¹⁰⁴⁶ But above all, the actions of Iranian policymakers have echoed a strong desire to see trade in technology and knowhow between the countries flourish, leading Iranian officials to encourage German investment in Iranian modernisation efforts, while particularly articulating a determination to collaborate in areas of “technology and machinery”.¹⁰⁴⁷ For Iran, access to Western technology and

¹⁰⁴⁰ Sarah Stefanini and Kalina Oroschakoff, "The Coming Russia-Iran Energy Axis: Russia Tries to Gain a Foothold, Not a Competitor," *Politico*, July 21, 2015 2015.

¹⁰⁴¹ Lane, 82.

¹⁰⁴² Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 50.

¹⁰⁴³ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁰⁴⁴ "Ein Drittel Der Iranischen Wirtschaft Ist Deutsch," *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, February 3, 2014 2014.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Virginia Harrison, "What Iranians Want: U.S. Vacations and German Cars," *CNN Money*, September 10, 2015 2015.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Tom Gerken, "Iranian Officials Mocked for Using Foreign Products," *BBC News*, March 20, 2018 2018.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Alessi, "Small German Firms Hold Edge in Iran."

knowhow remains central to establishing competitiveness¹⁰⁴⁸ in numerous sectors, meaning cultivating a partnership capable of facilitating these needs remains an imperative of its economic policy.

Yet, most insightful regarding the implications of such an imperative, is that German policymakers are fully cognizant of this dynamic, leading policy statements from the Foreign Ministry to both acknowledge that “Iran [...] views [Germany] as a preferred trading partner”,¹⁰⁴⁹ as well as to actively encourage German firms to engage in this field, given Iran’s “sizeable modernisation needs in industrial and infrastructure sectors, [means] German firms can achieve an important premium with their products and technologies.”¹⁰⁵⁰ This calculus is significant, not only in that German policy efforts consistently reflect an unabashed desire for intensification of commercial and economic relations, despite noted challenges to normative concerns such as human rights,¹⁰⁵¹ but also, in that it bespeaks recognition within Germany that a substantive economic carrot, or stick, to utilise against Iran exists, given the leverage they hold over Iranian modernisation needs.

While preceding chapters have established Germany is often averse to thinking in terms of carrots and sticks analytically, it has similarly been argued that much of Germany’s inability to utilise economic relations with Iran, or at least incentivise tangible reforms in non-economic realms through trade, is attributable to the fact German-Iranian economic ties are not meaningful enough to Iranian policymakers to create leverage for a carrot or stick scenario.¹⁰⁵² This remains a critical analytical point for interpretations which might posit a continuation of economic relations between Germany and Iran, despite a lack of progress in non-economic areas, could nevertheless remain consistent with non-economic aims and interest. This could theoretically occur, if a lack of leverage meant Germany could not utilise a carrot or stick option, even if they wanted to, meaning despite the assumption an ideal-type civilian power would sacrifice economic ties for normative concerns, a continuation of ties could,

¹⁰⁴⁸ Tamer Badawi, "Iranian Economic Reform between Rouhani and the Guards," in *Sada: Middle East Analysis* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2015).

¹⁰⁴⁹ Auswärtiges Amt, "Außenpolitik — Iran — Grundlinien Der Außenpolitik," <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/aussenpolitik/laender/iran-node/-/202448>.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Energie, "Zyprien Trifft Iranischen Verkehrsminister."

¹⁰⁵¹ Refer to chapter four.

¹⁰⁵² Bergenäs, 492.; Reissner, 39.

nevertheless, strive for alternative goals of moderation and integration, rather than rationalist, self-interested, economic gain.

However, what cognizance on the part of German policymakers regarding their importance to Iran economically, suggests, is recognition of the very existence of leverage, but a fundamental unwillingness to utilise this for normative concerns such as human rights. Instead, it bespeaks a determination to encourage firms to leverage their competitive advantage for profoundly economic ends. Analyses of German-Iranian economic relations are fairly unanimous: Germany is not only “Iran’s most important [...] partner in the field of high-tech”,¹⁰⁵³ “Iran’s technical sector [...] depends heavily upon German products and services”,¹⁰⁵⁴ meaning both German technology and machinery,¹⁰⁵⁵ as well as expertise of German firms, remains central to Iran’s modernisation efforts,¹⁰⁵⁶ and in turn, its long-term economic and political interests. From this, it is argued “in economic terms, Germany is more important to Iran than Iran to Germany.”¹⁰⁵⁷ This argument appears largely confirmed by data, which indicates two-thirds of all Iranian industrial businesses¹⁰⁵⁸ utilise German machinery and engineering products,¹⁰⁵⁹ and “Germany is the market leader in seven out of nine engineering sectors” within Iran.¹⁰⁶⁰ This means Germany’s role is not only vital to Iranian economic interests at present, it will remain so for the foreseeable future, with German parts, technology and knowhow concerning “machinery, motor vehicle[s] [...] components, hardware [...] metal products, and chemical products”, constituting a core of German exports to Iran.¹⁰⁶¹

With this, the economic imperative of Germany only deepens for Iran. Consequently, for German policymakers, commercial and trade relations, particularly in terms of technology and knowhow, is notable in that it represents a clear opportunity for realisation of two different, and somewhat mutually-exclusive interests: leveraging ties for reform in non-economic areas,

¹⁰⁵³ Küntzel, "Germany and a Nuclear Iran," 51.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Jones.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Kaiser.

¹⁰⁵⁶ "Ein Drittel Der Iranischen Wirtschaft Ist Deutsch."

¹⁰⁵⁷ Rudolf and Kemp, 4.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Küntzel, "Germany and a Nuclear Iran," 51.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Halevi.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 22.

¹⁰⁶¹ Jones.

albeit at the expense of current economic interests, or seizing an opportunity for long-term economic engagement and growth. Naturally, the former is that which is expected of a civilian power Germany, whereas the latter, largely challenges civilian power expectations, and bespeaks more rationalist and materialist aims.

With this in mind, the policy narrative, juxtaposed with action by Germany, remains particularly insightful. Taking the Kohl years as an example, on the one hand, German policy documents stated the Berlin Republic implements a “very restrictive [...] export policy” vis-à-vis Iran, in which trade between the countries is heavily scrutinised.¹⁰⁶² Notwithstanding this contention, however, data in fact indicates Germany cultivated 3.241 billion DM by 1996 in post-unification technology trade with Iran.¹⁰⁶³ Insightfully, this position of coalitions has continued into the contemporary era, leading Merkel’s government in 2008 to lament U.S. attempts to stymie German trade in the “machine and engineering” sectors, noting the government’s interpretation that trade in technology and knowhow is wholly immaterial to wider concerns regarding Iran, including proliferation.¹⁰⁶⁴ In doing so, this establishes a clear delineation for German policymakers, whereby trade with Iran, particularly in the lucrative area of technology, is legitimised and even prioritised, because they fail to infer value in sacrificing economic engagement, for most non-economic concerns. In framing the policy as such, this would certainly appear to upgrade confidence in seeking economic engagement, for maximisation of economic returns. But does this delineation and prioritisation factually evidence rejection of normative, and non-rationalist considerations in German trade policy with Iran? To answer this question, it is particularly helpful to consider Sigmar Gabriel’s comments preceding a visit to Tehran in 2016.

As characterised by Gabriel, there is, in fact, “a moral” form of Germany’s dialogue,¹⁰⁶⁵ which would accordingly imply normative considerations, and potentially upgrade confidence in civilian power assumptions. However, Gabriel’s further comments reinforce the clear delineation of German trade policy, noting “we are a country that lives on exports”, and

¹⁰⁶² Bundesregierung, "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Drucksache 13/3483," 4.

¹⁰⁶³ Ibid., 18.

¹⁰⁶⁴ "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Haltung Der Bundesregierung Zu Wirtschaftssanktionen Gegenüber Dem Iran Und Deren Auswirkung Auf Deutsche Unternehmen," 1.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Nelles and Gathmann.

adding “with states such [as Iran] [...] commercial relations are [essential despite its] “authoritarian led regime”.¹⁰⁶⁶ In presenting it as such, although Gabriel maintains a normative side of Germany’s relationship exists, he is unabashed in articulating a German calculus that economic engagement with Iran constitutes a fundamental interest in the relationship for Germany, and that such engagement for explicitly rationalist, and materialist interests, occurs with indifference to the authoritarian form of government. In being stated this way, such comments bear striking resemblance to the previously mentioned *Handelsstaat* interpretation, which entails indifference to the normative considerations of a civilian power type, despite attempts of civilian power proponents to appropriate this term. It is imperative to recall from preceding chapters that a central element of a civilian power disposition in economic relations is to avoid engaging with authoritarian figures in such regimes.¹⁰⁶⁷ This means Gabriel’s statements not only strongly upgrade confidence in a Germany seeking economic relations as a fundamental interest of its relationship with Iran, but they also significantly downgrade confidence that economic ties represent a catalyst for realisation of any non-economic goals. This is discernible from the clear attempt by policymakers to establish a delineation of economic interests, from other considerations, which accordingly reinforces the interpretation economic interests occur independent from other, normative aims. Consequently, present interpretations in literature which seek to legitimise German economic engagement with Iran, based upon perceived non-economic, underlying interests, are severely challenged by these findings.

Yet, before determining with any confidence that economic relations constitute the ultimate explanation of Germany’s relationship with Iran, or entirely refute assumptions of a civilian power Germany in this case, by demonstrating normative concerns, or identity, fail to have demonstrable effects, it is firstly imperative to determine this economic interest occurs without limitation, or parallel interest. And secondly, if any such limitations or parallel interests should exist, do they indicate identity-based considerations shape, or inform this policy interest? Helpfully, there exists a key dynamic of Germany’s commercial relations with Iran,

¹⁰⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Refer to chapters one, two, and in particular, four.

in the context of technology and knowhow, which serves to develop an answer to these questions.

5.6.1 Trade Limits, Identity, and the Contingency of German Economic Interest

It is interesting to note, transference of technology and knowhow to Iran has not simply transpired through conventional transactions, but often occurred through elaborate, clandestine Iranian efforts. In one prominent instance, an “Iran-linked”, but German-operated factory, was established in Dinslaken, Germany, as “part of a global network of [...] businesses designed to funnel [...] materials to the Iranian government and to evade sanctions”.¹⁰⁶⁸ The factory was noted to exhibit surprising disinterest in profit, but a keen determination to leverage “material and expertise” from Germany, for purposes experts contend, was related to nuclear proliferation efforts.¹⁰⁶⁹ Critically, this discrete instance is but a microcosm of a wider trend, in that Germany’s position as a leader in technological components utilised in Iran, and its Iran-friendly business attitude, had fostered the emergence of Germany as a key locale for Iranian acquisition of materials for nuclear proliferation and military ends. Given the inability to legally purchase many such components, rather than seek acquisition through conventional avenues, Tehran demonstrated a desire to “acquire critical German technologies” from “German soil”, that are banned for export to Iran.¹⁰⁷⁰

However, in doing so, this dynamic presents a valuable lens through which to assess Germany’s position concerning potential maximisation of commercial and trade relations, in that if Germany willingly, and knowingly allowed illicit trade, with probable use for military ends, to occur, this would certainly downgrade confidence in the pertinence of any normative, or civilian power preoccupations, within the economic relationship. Yet, critically, evidence indicates that rather than allow such illicit trade between the two countries, these Iranian

¹⁰⁶⁸ Michael Birnbaum, "U.S. Blacklists Global Network of Iran-Linked Companies," *The Washington Post*, June 4, 2013 2013.; Michael Birnbaum and Joby Warrick, "A Mysterious Iranian-Run Factory in Germany," *ibid.*, April 15, 2013.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Birnbaum and Warrick

¹⁰⁷⁰ Jones.

efforts have, in fact, constituted a cause for proactive German intervention regarding exports to Iran. As a result, during 2006, German “authorities raided 41 small- to medium- sized domestic firms [...] suscep[ted] of supplying Iran with [...] dual-use technology”,¹⁰⁷¹ and in doing so, demonstrated that a definitive limitation to trade with Iran exists.

Notwithstanding a clear desire to see maximisation of trade with Iran in a conventional context, dual- and military-use contexts remain an area in which the otherwise ardent trade proponent, exhibits an entirely different attitude and policy. Yet, importantly, such a limitation is not, in and of itself, evidence of German willingness to sacrifice economic relations for normative considerations. In fact, not only has evidence to date indicated Germany’s actions in relations with Iran bespeak indifference to most facets of the civilian power role concept, as well as wider assumptions of contemporary German foreign policy and identity, it highlights a Germany inclined to seek maximisation of trade and commercial relations, while lamenting the extent to which external factors hinder these interests, and cost them monetarily. In this sense, evidence is compelling that Germany’s actions in economic relations with Tehran, exhibit the hallmarks of a rationalist, and materialist economic actor. Yet, the existence of any limitation to trade does represent a potential challenge to an economic explanation for Germany’s relationship with Iran. With this in mind, in order to make a final determination, it is vital to consider whether limitations to trade in dual-use and military technologies challenge pragmatic, economic interests, or in fact, serve to evidence considerations beyond mere rationalism, including potentially, the civilian power role concept. In this manner, one must consider the extent to which Germany’s policy towards dual-use and military goods with Iran may reflect features of Germany’s identity.

5.7 Key Economic Limitations: Dual-Use Goods and Concern Over Use of Force

Given the previous section evidenced a clear limitation to an otherwise rationalist, and materialist economic interest on the part of Germany, attributing this restraint to either wider rationalist, or non-rationalist interests, is vital for purposes of this thesis. To this point, it is

¹⁰⁷¹ Ibid.

important to recall that in addition to evidence in this chapter, which upgrades confidence in Germany seeking economic relations as a core interest of the relationship itself, preceding chapters have demonstrated a fundamental German aversion to implementation of sanctions, or other similar hindrances to economic ties.¹⁰⁷² In doing so, this general aversion suggested a potential interest in, or causality of, economic ties, whereby, amidst a perceived “conflict [...] of goals between trade and [...] sanctions”,¹⁰⁷³ choosing to reject sanctions would appear consistent with a desire to seek maximisation of trade and commercial relations, rather than allow other interests to curb economic ties.

Potentially problematic for such interpretations, however, is recognition that Germany has nevertheless, at times, agreed to implement sanctions which stand to impact wider trade interests, despite an evidenced willingness to prioritise economic considerations. In doing so, and in similar fashion to Germany’s readiness to limit trade at a certain point, this sporadic sanctioning presents an interesting puzzle for rationalist explanations, and accordingly, raises a vital question: what accounts for this seemingly capricious position? And furthermore, is there a discernible connection between this occasional shift on sanctions, and Germany’s other evidenced limitation to economic relations with Iran?

Previous chapters noted this shift may occur as a result of seeking to ensure use of force does not occur, or to pursue non-economic goals.¹⁰⁷⁴ However, this chapter has severely downgraded confidence that economic engagement occurs for any reason other than purely economic interest. In this manner, the mystery surrounding a willingness to curb economic interests presents a key hurdle for resolving the question of causality, and explanation for German interest in the relationship. Yet, helpfully, analysis of German policy demonstrates that actions of policymakers concerning Iranian trade policy, mirrors articulated policy, in noting the position of “no [...] further measures [against Iran, than to prevent][...] military use [...] [and] dual-use” exports.¹⁰⁷⁵ Bearing in mind one of the most salient characterisations regarding Germany’s aversion to sanctions is that such policy aspires to “impose as few

¹⁰⁷² Refer to chapters three and four.

¹⁰⁷³ Reissner, 47.

¹⁰⁷⁴ See chapters three and four.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Bundesregierung, "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Drucksache 13/3483."

sanctions as possible but as many as are strictly necessary to [...] avoid [a] [...] military attack",¹⁰⁷⁶ it would appear a consistent theme emerges from analysis of Germany's trade policy toward Iran, in which themes of military force, and bestowing means of applying force to others, coincide with a willingness to curb otherwise ardent support for maximisation of economic relations. But despite critical recognition of this limitation, what, precisely, does this apparent intersection of concern over military force inform about German interest and identity in the context of Germany's policy?

In a general sense, it is said for post-unification Germany, "the export of sensitive technologies exposes the age-old national policy conflict between the pursuit of security and pursuit of wealth",¹⁰⁷⁷ and the case of German foreign policy towards Iran appears no different.

Regarding this dilemma, it is critical to appreciate that post-war Germany was brazen in its willingness to export technologies and materials utilised in both nuclear proliferation, as well as weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs,¹⁰⁷⁸ amidst a leading interest of successive coalitions "to ensure [...] Germany's industry sustain as little negative impact as possible".¹⁰⁷⁹

Having implemented such a policy, this would appear to suggest that a post-unification Germany willing to export dual-use products, is in fact, consistent with past tendencies of the FRG. Critically, however, a sudden and profound transformation in Germany's policy regarding export of dual-use goods and weapons occurred¹⁰⁸⁰ during the early years of unification, resulting in Germany becoming a staunch advocate for increasing control over sensitive exports.¹⁰⁸¹ This transformation even culminated in a key, 1994 amendment to Germany's export law, aimed to increase government oversight, and severely punish firms in violation.¹⁰⁸² Consequently, in stark contrast to "Germany's foreign policy tradition" of avoiding export restrictions, Germany instead emerged as a prominent leader in Europe for implementing export restrictions on dual-use goods.¹⁰⁸³ Although this restriction is strictly limited to dual-use and military hardware, the decision nevertheless suggests Germany's

¹⁰⁷⁶ Küntzel, "Germany and a Nuclear Iran," 52.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Crawford, 143.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Ibid., 145.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Harald Müller, "Germany and the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction," in *Germany's Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, ed. Hanns Maull (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 50.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Ibid., 51.

¹⁰⁸¹ Crawford, 146.

¹⁰⁸² Ibid.

¹⁰⁸³ Ibid., 149-51.

“preference for a stable and secure international system” effectively supplants “traditional national gains from trade” as an interest, given such a profound German policy shift contradicts rationalist expectations of unlimited, and maximised trade potential.¹⁰⁸⁴

Taking this into account, the policy decision not only appears to challenge interpretations of a Germany committed to unrestrained economic engagement with Iran, but it suggests a Germany, for whom banning dual-use exports to Iran is potentially attributable to considerations beyond the scope of, if not antithetical to, rationalist and materialist calculation. This, in turn, provokes crucial questions: including what transpired to induce this policy change for Germany, as well as why this momentous transformation in its foreign economic policy would occur so rapidly?¹⁰⁸⁵

Interestingly, according to “conventional wisdom and almost universally accepted” analysis, the impetus for this transformation is attributable to the “Rabta affair”, in which a German company was responsible for exporting technology and material to Libya, utilised for production of poison gas.¹⁰⁸⁶ Of vital importance, the salience of controversy surrounding the Rabta affair, which ultimately served to transform German policy concerning exports, was rooted in “its reminder of the Nazi past that tapped into collective memory shaping foreign policy culture.”¹⁰⁸⁷ Critically, this calculus is confirmed by analysis of policy narratives, including those of Helmut Kohl, who stated:

*“enhancement of export controls is extraordinarily important [...] because of Germany’s historical experiences [...] [by which Germany] “recognises particular responsibility for a restrictive arms export policy and [...] export controls for dual-use goods”.”*¹⁰⁸⁸

In this manner, it is of paramount importance to recognise the causality of this sole, evidenced area of limitation to German trade relations with Iran, is fundamentally attributable to the salience, and influence of historical and collective memories, rather than rationalist calculation. This means despite arguments Germany curbed its trade relations with Iran as a

¹⁰⁸⁴ Ibid., 147.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Müller, 50.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Crawford, 152-53.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Ibid., 152.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Harald Müller et al., “From Black Sheep to White Angel? The New German Export Control Policy,” (Frankfurt am Main: Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, 1994), 45.

result of pressure from Washington,¹⁰⁸⁹ evidence in fact demonstrates that Germany's decision was a consequence of its own policy interest, and one attributable to normative understandings and interests. In this sense, despite relations with Iran constituting a source of transatlantic strife,¹⁰⁹⁰ Germany's policy regarding dual-use exports represented one of the few instances of policy convergence¹⁰⁹¹ with Washington, leading one Clinton-era U.S. policymaker to reference Berlin's "remarkable restraint",¹⁰⁹² given the potential windfall from such exports to Iran. But to what extent does Germany allow the salience of its identity in this context to impact upon wider economic interests, and what does this inform about a potential economic explanation of the relationship?

Critically, policy statements have attempted to leverage reference of "a complete weapons embargo and export ban for dual-use goods", as supporting evidence for contentions Germany's policy, does in fact, strive for non-economic goals, including moderation of the Iranian leadership.¹⁰⁹³ However, evidence in this thesis clearly demonstrates that Germany's economic relations underscore a fundamental desire to maximise economic ties, provided they are *beyond* dual-use and military contexts. This means such contentions are suspect, and likely attributable to seeking legitimisation of its ties, just as Germany has shown in the past by leveraging narratives of E.U. collaboration to justify its policy decisions vis-à-vis Iran.¹⁰⁹⁴ Nevertheless, it is insightful to recognise that despite a clear tendency on Germany's part to refuse sanctions participation beyond the scope of U.N. Security Council mandates,¹⁰⁹⁵ when it comes to the issue of dual-use goods, Germany's policy efforts have, in fact, represented a stricter benchmark than the U.N. measures concerning this area of trade.¹⁰⁹⁶ This is particularly significant, as Germany's willingness to implement sanctions against broader Iranian economic sectors in relation to Iranian proliferation and illicit military technology acquisition, directly resulted in economic consequences for core, medium-sized enterprises in

¹⁰⁸⁹ Struwe, 31.; Lane, 83.

¹⁰⁹⁰ See chapter three.

¹⁰⁹¹ Bergenäs, 500.

¹⁰⁹² Lane, 83.

¹⁰⁹³ Bundesregierung, "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Die Europäisch-Iranische Handelsbank Und Die Deutsche Handelspolitik Gegenüber Dem Iran," 8.

¹⁰⁹⁴ See chapters three and four.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Reissner, 49.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Bundesregierung, "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Das Iranische Atomprogramm Und Die Verhängung Von Sanktionen Seitens Der Eu Gegen Iran," 3-4.

Germany,¹⁰⁹⁷ entirely unrelated to dual-use exports. In doing so, this demonstrates that when faced with a hard decision between much wider economic interests vis-à-vis Iran, and commitment to its identity, Germany allows the identity to triumph as the ultimate arbiter of policy. Illustrative of the depth of Germany's commitment to hindering military-related implications through its relationship, it has been noted that "all [Germany's] [...] sanctions [are] [...] made with clear intent to avoid a military strike."¹⁰⁹⁸ As a result, it would appear that Germany's identity-based limitation to economic interests, extends beyond the scope of preventing exportation of dual-use technologies and weapons, and in fact accentuates a wider, preeminent commitment to ensuring German policy towards Iran does not directly, or even indirectly, result in military force being utilised by any respective party.

This dynamic is similarly recognisable in the case of Germany's curious, and most uncharacteristic support for a 2012 European Union oil embargo against Iran, entailing further peripheral sanctioning in the Iranian "financial sector".¹⁰⁹⁹ For a Germany evidenced to demonstrate objection to sanctioning Iran, keen to separate financial transactions from wider Iran policy efforts, and seeking maximisation of economic ties beyond the scope of dual-use and weapons, this apparent shift in policy problematizes an otherwise very consistent position of successive Berlin Republic coalitions. Yet, analysis of German statements explaining the rationale note this decision occurred amidst particular concern over Iran's missile program,¹¹⁰⁰ as well as proliferation efforts. In this sense, it is of profound significance, when viewed from the standpoint of concern over escalation to military conflict being a possible explanation of Germany's Iran policy, that such policy statements regarding a perceived shift in policy, are, in fact, wholly consistent with post-unification policy trends. Confidence in this interpretation of its decision to limit economic relations is well-evidenced by statements addressing the embargo and sanctioning, which note, this feature of a "dual-track approach", entailing dialogue and diplomacy, as well as pressure,¹¹⁰¹ aspires "to serve [a]

¹⁰⁹⁷ Reissner, 47.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Küntzel, "Germany and a Nuclear Iran," 52.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Deutscher Bundestag, "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Sanktionspolitik Und Wirtschaftsembargo Gegen Den Iran — Drucksache 17/10508," (2012), 1-2.

¹¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹¹⁰¹ "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Die Iran Politik Der Bundesregierung, Drucksache 16/5533," (Deutscher Bundestag, 2007), 1.

peaceful aim”,¹¹⁰² in which “all activities of the Bundesregierung, on both strands of the, ‘dual-track approach’ [...] served and serve the hindrance of military escalation”.¹¹⁰³

As noted in other German policy documents, a “dual-track” approach is not indicative of a policy shift, but rather demonstrates consistency of policy, from another vantage point.

Bearing in mind the findings of chapter three –which noted both Germany’s commitment to its subjective policy interest, and a willingness to increase pressure so as to ensure diplomacy occurs, rather than use of force– this interpretation of German economic policy towards Iran appears to evidence that an otherwise economically driven relationship, is nevertheless still consistent with a German desire to seek diplomacy, amidst concern over potential military escalation. In doing so, this demonstrates that notwithstanding Germany’s desire to see maximisation of economic relations beyond the realm of dual-use goods, a commitment to its identity, predicated upon collective and historical memories, is nevertheless shown to have greater influence upon Germany’s policy position in this area. Accordingly, and in support of this analysis, it is worthwhile to ponder the significance of Germany’s stated desire to see a full, and revitalised economic relationship in the wake of the JCPOA’s conclusion, albeit still curbed by a dual-use ban.¹¹⁰⁴ In doing so, this highlights, for Germany, policy in fact maintains striking consistency in the economic sphere, and an occasional willingness to undermine economic interests, is attributable to perceived infringement upon a more preeminent concern of mitigating military escalation vis-à-vis Iran. In this manner, Germany’s foreign policy toward Iran could best be described as: *economic in nature, but nevertheless constrained by the influence of an identity*.

Conclusion

In the first section of this chapter, it was demonstrated that for post-war Germany, economic relations not only emerged as a source of legitimacy and identity, but metamorphosed through a nexus of these, into a fundamental interest. However, in doing so, questions have arisen regarding the extent to which such an interest reflects a rationalist, normalised interpretation

¹¹⁰² "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Sanktionspolitik Und Wirtschaftsembargo Gegen Den Iran — Drucksache 17/10508," 2-6.

¹¹⁰³ Ibid., 12.

¹¹⁰⁴ Energie, "Iran –Wirtschaftliche Beziehungen."

of contemporary German foreign policy, or serves to affirm constructivist-inspired interpretations, which perceive continuity in German foreign policy, and the influence of identity as a civilian power. It was instrumental to note that in order to affirm a constructivist-inspired characterisation, such as the civilian power role concept, this would require one to determine that normative assumptions and identity have a demonstrable effect on policy and interest. Conversely, this section noted that a Germany driven by economic interests, as the aim in and of itself, would not only appear more similar to a *Handelsstaat* characterisation, but would imply a more rationalist approach to its relations with Iran. Critically, in this manner, it was demonstrated that questions of rationalism, versus constructivism in the economic sphere, are not only at the core of existing disputes in literature regarding interpretation of economic ties between the two countries, but further, central to answering questions of underlying German interest in the wider relationship, as well as determining the extent to which such ties may challenge prevailing assumptions of contemporary German foreign policy, identity, and interest, in a broader sense.

With this in mind, it was shown that contrary to many arguments regarding the relationship, which posit economic relations are too minuscule to shape German interest, or explain the relationship, German policymakers and firms place a value on economic relations that are not adequately captured by numbers alone. This long-term valuation, and the manner in which various facets of the valuation occur, evidenced a Germany both driven by a desire to see unrestricted transactions and trade beyond the scope of military use, as well as one shown in analysis of narratives, to particularly lament the financial losses incurred, rather than concern itself with the impact upon most non-economic, and normative interests. This dynamic was further evidenced within policy statements reflecting a general disinterest on the part of Germany to leverage its economic relationship for normative ends, and instead, demonstrated its active encouragement of businesses to seek maximisation of economic ties. In this sense, the evidence compellingly established a Germany driven by economic interests, and fundamentally challenging many assumptions underlying German foreign policy, identity, and interest, per the civilian power role concept. This means a *Handelsstaat* interpretation of Germany, featuring maximisation of interest, and general indifference to normative considerations such as human rights, would appear to best characterise *most* of Germany's economic relationship with Iran.

This characterisation notwithstanding, it was similarly evidenced that limitations to such interests do, in fact, exist, and most importantly, are attributable to a German identity rooted in historical and collective memories. In doing so, this appears to meet the threshold of demonstrating the effects of normative concerns and identity, albeit in a very limited part of economic ties. By evidencing this, the chapter has established confidence that limitations to economic ties are attributable to identity –something existing accounts have failed to adequately evidence, despite arguing a curbing of economic ties may occur for various reasons. This means, in a first for literature on the subject, the chapter demonstrates with a high-degree of confidence, that Germany's only limitation to economic interest vis-à-vis Iran, is a commitment to prevent military action, as a consequence of its normative and identity-based interest formation.

Taking the evidence of this chapter into account, it would appear the best characterisation of Germany's relationship with Iran is economic, but with the profoundly significant contingency that it does not interfere with this identity. Bearing this conclusion in mind, it is clear to see how existing interpretations of the economic relationship have managed to surmise strikingly different, and antithetical conclusions, despite possessing the same evidence. From an epistemological and ontological standpoint, rationalist and constructivist accounts are largely incompatible, and mutually exclusive. Yet, despite this fact, Germany's actions herein demonstrate a state driven by primarily rational economic interests, which are curbed by the influence of another, non-rationalist aim, to the extent they conflict. In this manner, by establishing confidence in such an interpretation of this relationship, a more accurate understanding of German interest and identity can be forged.

While confidence in a limitation to such economic interests has been evidenced, and accredited to identity, this provokes a vital question for purposes of addressing the overarching questions of this thesis: to what extent is this identity indicative of a civilian power commitment? To answer this question, the next, and final chapter, will aim to address a potential linkage between Germany's civilian power role concept, and concern over use of force in relations with Iran.

Chapter Six: Use of Force and Identity in Germany's Relationship with Iran

Introduction

The preceding empirical chapters demonstrated that three facets underlying Germany's civilian power role concept,¹¹⁰⁵ are unable to explain Germany's post-unification relations with Iran. In failing to do so, this inability has served to challenge prevailing understandings of post-unification German foreign policy, identity, and interest, as a civilian power.¹¹⁰⁶ Rather than supporting such an understanding of Germany, the previous chapters have instead evidenced a non-civilian power understanding –manifested in Germany's ambition to cultivate robust commercial and trade relations with Tehran– largely serves to explain its interest in relations with Iran.¹¹⁰⁷ However, notwithstanding a high-degree of confidence in an economic explanation concerning *most* of the relationship, the preceding chapter similarly established a critical, identity-based commitment to avoiding use of force, or even indirectly contributing to the potential for use of force through economic ties, curbed, or at times, stymied, this economic explanation of the relationship. Considering this identity-based commitment appears closely related to the fourth facet of Germany's civilian power role concept –in which use of force is detested, and political solutions are always preferred¹¹⁰⁸– the following chapter aims to examine whether such a facet of Germany's civilian power role concept can explain its policy in this regard. Furthermore, it intends to evaluate whether such an interest may account for other features of the relationship as well, beyond at times, curbing economic interests. As the theoretical framework and methodology chapter noted, a civilian power account of foreign policy need only to establish demonstrable effects of such an identity on the course of policy.¹¹⁰⁹ This also means, despite evidenced interest in commercial, and trade ties, to fully understand, and properly account for Germany's post-unification relationship with Iran, this necessitates explaining the case, without leaving aspects out.

¹¹⁰⁵ As outlined in chapter two.

¹¹⁰⁶ Refer to chapters one and two.

¹¹⁰⁷ Refer to chapters three through five.

¹¹⁰⁸ Refer to chapter two.

¹¹⁰⁹ Refer to chapter two.

With this in mind, the chapter will begin by presenting the antecedents of Germany's post-war aversion to use of force, including how this abhorrence ostensibly shapes its interest as a civilian power. Once established, the chapter then addresses how such an identity, and interest, have manifested themselves in the post-unification era, including debates concerning whether Germany may, in fact, exhibit a changing attitude towards utilisation of force, and participation in military engagements. Following this, Germany's relationship with Iran will be considered in light of these themes –through analysis of narratives and actions, in accordance with the process-tracing methodology– to answer the critical question, whether features of the relationship appear attributable to an interest of avoiding use of force, pursuant to civilian power assumptions. In doing so, this chapter aims to ultimately demonstrate, through consideration of primary, and secondary evidence, that Germany's policy towards Iran appears meaningfully shaped by the fourth, and final facet of the civilian power role concept, in which a commitment to preventing use of force, and seeking political solutions to foreign policy issues, does explain key elements of Germany's post-unification relationship with Iran, beyond economic interests alone.

6.1 Post-War Germany and a New Military Culture

Before turning to analysis of the relationship itself, it is firstly imperative to consider how themes regarding use of force have gained meaning, and evolved as interests of post-war German foreign policy. Only once this is accomplished, is it possible to interpret the manner in which Germany's post-war aversion towards use of force, may serve to account for its policy towards Iran, beyond a mere rationalist, and materialist explanation, and in accordance with the civilian power role concept. In this regard, it is critical to appreciate that preceding the Second World War, Germany exhibited a strong military culture,¹¹¹⁰ in which, pursuant to *Clausewitzian* notions, utilisation of military force remained a natural extension of the political playbook.¹¹¹¹ Accordingly, Germany held a fundamentally *Machtpolitik* outlook towards the

¹¹¹⁰ Thomas U. Berger, "Norms, Identity, and National Security in Germany and Japan," in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, ed. Peter J Katzenstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 330.

¹¹¹¹ Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War* (Jazzybee Verlag, 1940).

international environment, and this shaped the course of its policy and interest.¹¹¹² However, notwithstanding this pre-war culture, and its more rationalist implications for understandings of German foreign policy, as the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) emerged from World War Two a semi-sovereign state,¹¹¹³ and facing imposed measures regarding the future of its armed forces,¹¹¹⁴ it appeared pre-war militarism would be supplanted by a post-war military subordination.¹¹¹⁵

Importantly, however, far from being the mere result of exogenous expectations concerning the future of a West German military, it was West German society itself that expressed a strong aversion to its “pre-war military ethos”.¹¹¹⁶ The prevalence of this sentiment cultivated a post-war rejection of Germany’s traditional *Machtpolitik* approach,¹¹¹⁷ as the internalisation of “pacifistic principles”,¹¹¹⁸ resulted in a conscious repudiation of military force as an acceptable means of achieving foreign policy goals.¹¹¹⁹ With this, not only was “a ban on wars of aggression”, central to all of West German foreign policy,¹¹²⁰ but the FRG further diverged from rationalist accounts of foreign policy,¹¹²¹ in its avoidance of any military capacity, consistent with its strength and political importance.¹¹²² In accordance with Chancellor Konrad Adenauer’s vision,¹¹²³ West Germany spurned unilateral military capacity,¹¹²⁴ and instead, willingly made its military strategy one of subservience,¹¹²⁵ by seeking to become a

¹¹¹² Rainer Baumann and Gunther Hellmann, "Germany and the Use of Military Force: 'Total War', the 'Culture of Restraint' and the Quest for Normality," *German Politics* 10, no. 1 (2001): 66.

¹¹¹³ William E Paterson, "Beyond Semi-Sovereignty: The New Germany in the New Europe," *ibid.* 5, no. 2 (1996): 167.; "Does Germany Still Have a European Vocation?," 41.; "Helmut Kohl, 'the Vision Thing' and Escaping the Semi-Sovereignty Trap," 21.; Bulmer and Paterson, 1388.; Markovits and Reich, 52.

¹¹¹⁴, xi.

¹¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.; Berger, 319.; Paterson, "Beyond Semi-Sovereignty: The New Germany in the New Europe," 167.; Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 703.

¹¹¹⁶ Berger, 330.

¹¹¹⁷ Katzenstein, 9.

¹¹¹⁸ Markovits and Reich, xii.

¹¹¹⁹ Berger, 317.

¹¹²⁰ Harnisch and Maull, 1.

¹¹²¹ Baumann and Hellmann, "Germany and the Use of Military Force: 'Total War', the 'Culture of Restraint' and the Quest for Normality," 61-63.; Berger, 317.

¹¹²² Markovits and Reich, xii.

¹¹²³ Paterson, "Does Germany Still Have a European Vocation?," 43.

¹¹²⁴ Markovits and Reich, 2.; Harnisch and Maull, 1.; Berger, 318.

¹¹²⁵ Markovits and Reich, 138.; Marco Overhaus, "Civilian Power under Stress?: Germany, Nato, and the European Security and Defense Policy," in *Germany's Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, ed. Hanns Maull (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 66.

key player within multilateral defence institutions, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).¹¹²⁶

Accordingly, “peace and security” was more than a “main pillar” of West German foreign policy,¹¹²⁷ it was embodied in an “anti-militarist political culture”,¹¹²⁸ in which, consensus noted,¹¹²⁹ West Germany had declared “‘total peace’”.¹¹³⁰ In this sense, the cultural transformation of post-war German society concerning use of force, was particularly significant, in that it reflected how underlying convictions and values,¹¹³¹ particularly of a normative basis, ultimately functioned to determine that traditional power,¹¹³² and use of force as a foreign policy tool, should be avoided.¹¹³³ Operating as such, this normative understanding towards use of force, captured the influence of history, or historical memory,¹¹³⁴ in which remembrance of the National Socialist past, as well as the Second World War, ostensibly served to explain the sudden emergence of “a stable anti-militarist political culture”.¹¹³⁵ Thus, in accordance with a constructivist account of foreign policy –as noted in previous chapters–¹¹³⁶ this objective, historical memory, paired with its subjective, present understanding of the past, as collective memory, coalesced to forge West German restraint.¹¹³⁷ In this regard, not only are post-war German foreign policy, and its related military culture, attributable to profoundly ideological grounds –in stark contrast to rationalist and materialist understandings–¹¹³⁸ but critically, these ideological factors served to determine an underlying

¹¹²⁶ Berger, 336-7.; Katzenstein, 32-33.; Hyde-Price, 136-38.

¹¹²⁷ Markovits and Reich, 138.

¹¹²⁸ Baumann and Hellmann, "Germany and the Use of Military Force: 'Total War', the 'Culture of Restraint' and the Quest for Normality," 61-63.; Berger, 318-26.

¹¹²⁹ Markovits and Reich, 33.

¹¹³⁰ Baumann and Hellmann, "Germany and the Use of Military Force: 'Total War', the 'Culture of Restraint' and the Quest for Normality," 61.

¹¹³¹ Berger, 318.

¹¹³² Markovits and Reich, 3.

¹¹³³ Baumann and Hellmann, "Germany and the Use of Military Force: 'Total War', the 'Culture of Restraint' and the Quest for Normality," 68.

¹¹³⁴ Philippi, 50.; Berger, 318.; Paterson, "Beyond Semi-Sovereignty: The New Germany in the New Europe," 181-82.; Welch and Wittlinger, 44.; Banchoff, "German Policy Towards the European Union: The Effects of Historical Memory," 60-61.; "Historical Memory and German Foreign Policy: The Cases of Adenauer and Brandt," 36.; Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 56.; Pradetto, 21.

¹¹³⁵ Baumann and Hellmann, "Germany and the Use of Military Force: 'Total War', the 'Culture of Restraint' and the Quest for Normality," 62.

¹¹³⁶ Refer to chapters one and two.

¹¹³⁷ Markovits and Reich, xii-2.

¹¹³⁸ Ibid., 4-19.; Berger, 329.

identity,¹¹³⁹ in which anti-militarism became defined as a preeminent *interest*,¹¹⁴⁰ and manifested itself as a key component of Germany's supposed essence in foreign policy, as a *civilian power*.¹¹⁴¹

Accordingly, it would appear there is, indeed, a strong correlation between Germany's civilian power role concept, and a previously evidenced willingness to subordinate economic interests in the relationship, to identity-based concerns over potential use of military force.¹¹⁴² But having noted a connection between Germany's identity, and related interest in rejecting use of force as part of its civilian power role concept, this raises an important question: if Germany's civilian power role explains aspects of its policy in the relationship with Iran, in what manner would this anti-militarism interest be expected to inform their behaviour as a civilian power? By answering this question, it then becomes possible to determine whether the behaviour of post-unification Germany in the relationship, in fact corresponds to that of a civilian power.

6.2 Civilian Power Germany, and a Politics, Not Force, Approach to Foreign Policy

In regards to this question, for a civilian power Germany, the doctrine of peace remains one of the "two most important" aspects of its role.¹¹⁴³ As suggested by the term *civilian*, there exists an intrinsic association between the role concept, and notions of a non-militaristic bearing.¹¹⁴⁴ Indeed, based upon such notions, civilian powers actively strive to supersede rationalist, "military enforcement of rules", with "socially accepted norms", intended to "pacif[y] [...] [and] civili[ze] international relations" in the process.¹¹⁴⁵ This appears in a determination to focus foreign policy efforts on alternative, pacifistic methods of achieving its ends,¹¹⁴⁶ as civilian powers not only oppose the appropriateness of using military force in international

¹¹³⁹ Hyde-Price, 39.; Berger, 318-29.; Beverly Crawford and Kim B. Olsen, "The Puzzle of Persistence and Power: Explaining Germany's Normative Foreign Policy," *German Politics* 26, no. 4 (2017): 591-92.

¹¹⁴⁰ Berger, 323-24.; Markovits and Reich, 6.

¹¹⁴¹ Baumann and Hellmann, "Germany and the Use of Military Force: 'Total War', the 'Culture of Restraint' and the Quest for Normality," 68.

¹¹⁴² Refer to chapter five.

¹¹⁴³ Tewes, 11.

¹¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁴⁵ Harnisch and Maull, 3-4.

¹¹⁴⁶ Maull, 92-93.

relations, but further, question a connection between their own security, and military abilities.¹¹⁴⁷ In this regard, the interest of an “ideal type” civilian power, fundamentally exists in its resolution to “limit and abolish the use of war and violence in international relations”,¹¹⁴⁸ and an overall “quasi-pacifistic” disposition.¹¹⁴⁹ Yet, critically, the implication of this role-based abhorrence of utilizing military force, and the overwhelming preference for pacifistic tools¹¹⁵⁰ that comes with it, presents itself as a fundamental commitment to a policy of “politics not force”.¹¹⁵¹ In this manner, a clear favouring of political solutions to foreign policy issues, supposedly determines the course of policy,¹¹⁵² because its *identity*¹¹⁵³ holds political and diplomatic efforts are the only, fully-justifiable approach.¹¹⁵⁴

This means more than simply expecting a committed civilian power Germany to oppose military solutions vis-à-vis Iran, one would anticipate it demonstrating a “preference for diplomatic solutions and the exhaustion of all peaceful instruments before military action is considered”.¹¹⁵⁵ For a civilian power Germany, foreign policy is, at its essence, a means of staving off war, so as to avoid participation in it.¹¹⁵⁶ Thus, although a civilian power may exhibit robust participation in collective, and cooperative security organisations,¹¹⁵⁷ the underlying impetus for this nevertheless exists in the intentness to withhold force, by relegating security issues to the realm of multilateralism, and international cooperation.¹¹⁵⁸ However, it is imperative to recognise that notwithstanding a willingness –in exceedingly limited instances– to participate in collective security operations,¹¹⁵⁹ for a civilian power Germany, the only conditions under which it entertains collective participation, occur under a

¹¹⁴⁷ Meier, 69.

¹¹⁴⁸ Nina Philippi, "Civilian Power and War: The German Debate About out-of-Area Operations 1990-99," *ibid.*, 57.; Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," 37.

¹¹⁴⁹ Tewes, 11.

¹¹⁵⁰ Peter Rudolf, "The Transatlantic Relationship: A View from Germany," in *Germany's Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, ed. Hanns Maull (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 146.

¹¹⁵¹ Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 68.

¹¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵³ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 703.

¹¹⁵⁴ Baumann and Hellmann, "Germany and the Use of Military Force: 'Total War', the 'Culture of Restraint' and the Quest for Normality," 70.

¹¹⁵⁵ Müller, 58.; Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," 46.

¹¹⁵⁶ Philippi, 57.; Harnisch and Maull, 4.

¹¹⁵⁷ Meier, 69-77.; Harnisch and Maull, 4.; Maull, 96.; Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 56.; Yoder, 195.

¹¹⁵⁸ Harnisch and Maull, 4.; Philippi, 57.

¹¹⁵⁹ Refer to chapter two.

genuine belief that “peaceful means” are fully “exhausted”,¹¹⁶⁰ and the use of force itself is the only course of action “to reach a peaceful outcome”.¹¹⁶¹

In this regard, for a Germany adhering to its civilian power role in relations with Iran, one expects to see a clear determination to mitigate all potential for escalation of a military situation. This means an anomalous prevention of dual-use and military exports, at the expense of other evidenced interests in the relationship –as noted in the preceding chapter–¹¹⁶² does appear strongly consistent with the expected behaviour of a civilian power. More than that alone, the expectations of a civilian power Germany make clear: a Germany conformant to the civilian power role concept would be expected to demonstrate a consistent pursuit of non-military, political, and diplomatic approaches to the relationship itself. Accordingly, it is imperative to consider, where applicable, whether evidence suggests Germany’s unique strategy underlying its relations with Iran, is attributable to this wider concern over use of force, and a commitment to political solutions. Before turning to the relationship, however, it is important to address another question: to what extent might Germany’s post-unification attitude concerning use of force be evolving? And to what extent does change suggest features of Germany’s civilian power identity, and interest, are similarly evolving on the subject? In order to establish full confidence in the role expectations of a civilian power Germany regarding themes of military force, and Iran, such questions must be answered.

6.3 Post-Unification Questions of a Changing German Military Culture

With this in mind, it is imperative to recall from previous chapters, that with unification of Germany, widespread speculation, and a core question of German foreign policy and interest emerged, about whether based upon rationalist understandings of international relations, Germany might revert to its former, militaristic ways, as a fully *normalised*, and unrestrained state.¹¹⁶³ In this manner, the question of post-unification Germany’s attitude regarding use of

¹¹⁶⁰ Philippi, 58.; Maull, *Germany's Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, 3.

¹¹⁶¹ Philippi, 58.

¹¹⁶² Refer to chapter five.

¹¹⁶³ Philippi, 51.; Markovits and Reich, 43-47.; Maull, *Germany's Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, 2-3.; Hellmann, "The Sirens of Power and German Foreign Policy: Who Is Listening?," 30-31.; Bulmer, Jeffery, and Paterson, 15.; Jeffery and Paterson, 62.; Paterson, "Beyond Semi-Sovereignty: The New Germany in the

military force, in many ways, embodies the essence of wider questions concerning supposed *continuity* as a civilian power, in the post-unification, Berlin Republic.¹¹⁶⁴ Despite rampant speculation, however, key indicators in the early years of reunification suggested the previous, anti-militarist culture underpinning the FRG, indeed, continued to shape post-unification German foreign policy, identity, and interest.¹¹⁶⁵ Public opinion underscored both a “peaceful” disposition in Germany,¹¹⁶⁶ and a general abhorrence of using force,¹¹⁶⁷ in which some concluded, assuredly, post-unification “German power does not take the form of tanks and guns”.¹¹⁶⁸ Yet, notwithstanding initially unambiguous evidence of continuity, new challenges emerged over time, leading others to posit, after a decade of unification, Germany’s attitude towards use of military force had evolved considerably.¹¹⁶⁹

Almost immediately following unification, Germany’s policy regarding military force was put to the test, as intense, and at times, “acrimonious debate”, over German participation in the Gulf War, bespoke a deeper, unresolved question, about the future of German interest, and power.¹¹⁷⁰ Despite such questions, low public support for German involvement,¹¹⁷¹ and the continued salience of Germany’s anti-militarist political culture,¹¹⁷² resulted in a strong rejection of participating in a military coalition.¹¹⁷³ In doing so, Germany’s policy reflected a continuation of the FRG’s foreign policy, identity, and interest concerning use of force, as now unified Germany, deliberately sought to avoid military engagement,¹¹⁷⁴ in order to convey its “peacefulness and anti-militarism”, in accordance with civilian power role expectations.¹¹⁷⁵

New Europe," 175.; "Does Germany Still Have a European Vocation?," 44.; Banchoff, "German Identity and European Integration," 263-64.; Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," 35-40.; Maull, 91.

¹¹⁶⁴ Markovits and Reich, 8-24. Harnisch, "Change and Continuity in Post-Unification German Foreign Policy," 35.; Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 696.; Wittlinger and Larose, 484.

¹¹⁶⁵ Rainer Baumann and Gunther Hellmann, "Germany and the Use of Military Force: 'Total War', the 'Culture of Restraint' and the Quest for Normality," *ibid.* 10, no. 1 (2001): 63.

¹¹⁶⁶ Markovits and Reich, xi.;

¹¹⁶⁷ Paterson, "Beyond Semi-Sovereignty: The New Germany in the New Europe," 176.

¹¹⁶⁸ Markovits and Reich, 2.

¹¹⁶⁹ Philippi, 49.

¹¹⁷⁰ Markovits and Reich, 137.

¹¹⁷¹ Pradetto, 24.; Baumann and Hellmann, "Germany and the Use of Military Force: 'Total War', the 'Culture of Restraint' and the Quest for Normality," 70.

¹¹⁷² Berger, 322-44.

¹¹⁷³ Smith, 52.; Philippi, 49.; Baumann and Hellmann, "Germany and the Use of Military Force: 'Total War', the 'Culture of Restraint' and the Quest for Normality," 61.

¹¹⁷⁴ Berger, 322.

¹¹⁷⁵ Philippi, 52-64.

Nevertheless, a key result of Germany's overt abstention, was the emergence of further debate, in which many questioned whether Germany should, or even legally could, support multilateral military efforts, bearing in mind the centrality of multilateralism and cooperation to the civilian power role concept.¹¹⁷⁶

As new questions emerged over time, Germany's policy exhibited subtle adjustments. Limited, non-combat roles, with United Nations-backed, multilateral military operations in Cambodia (1991-93), as well as Somalia (1993) occurred, under a rationale that supporting humanitarian, and peacekeeping efforts, remained consistent with Germany's identity-based commitment to peace and cooperation, and did not fall into the category of using military force.¹¹⁷⁷ Indeed, with such a noted calculus, in these cases, a German public that was strongly averse to military participation in the Gulf War, expressed "cautious [...] approval" of Germany's policy in this area.¹¹⁷⁸ Parallel to this, debates –continuing from the Gulf War period– surrounding the legality of German participation, culminated in the July 12, 1994 ruling by the Federal Constitutional Court,¹¹⁷⁹ which stated, provided there is a majority consent from the *Bundestag*,¹¹⁸⁰ and the efforts are fundamentally about ensuring peace,¹¹⁸¹ Germany could partake in out-of-area, multilateral military operations. Now, not only was Germany unrestrained in terms of sovereignty as a military actor, it was legally empowered to act within multilateral military frameworks. But to what extent did full empowerment actually engender, or even suggest, tangible change? Or, did Germany continue to restrain itself in accordance with its identity-based commitment to avoiding use of military force as a civilian power?

¹¹⁷⁶ Smith, 52.; Philippi, 52.; Baumann and Hellmann, "Germany and the Use of Military Force: 'Total War', the 'Culture of Restraint' and the Quest for Normality," 69.

¹¹⁷⁷ Philippi, 49-54.; Hanns Maull, "Germany's Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", *ibid.*, 114.; Pradetto, 19.

¹¹⁷⁸ Berger, 344.

¹¹⁷⁹ Das Bundesverfassungsgericht, "Verlautbarung Der Pressestelle Des Bundesverfassungsgerichts, Pressemitteilung Nr. 29/1994 Vom 12. Juli 1994," news release, 12. Juli 1994, 1994, <https://www.bundesverfassungsgericht.de/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen/DE/1994/bvg94-029.html>.

¹¹⁸⁰ Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 60.; Philippi, 60.; Berger, 345.; Baumann and Hellmann, "Germany and the Use of Military Force: 'Total War', the 'Culture of Restraint' and the Quest for Normality," 74.

¹¹⁸¹ Markovits and Reich, 142.

As discussed previously –in chapter four of this thesis– Srebrenica represented a critical turning point in post-unification foreign policy,¹¹⁸² as an ostensibly civilian power Germany found itself facing an existential dilemma: allow a genocide to occur, or use military force in order to prevent it.¹¹⁸³ As noted in chapter four, facing this dilemma, robust debate led to “majority support” for Germany’s limited participation in aspects of the Balkans conflict,¹¹⁸⁴ in stark contrast to previously overwhelming opposition to German military participation during the Gulf War.¹¹⁸⁵ However, as similarly presented in chapter four, the circumstances of this case were profoundly unique, in that German participation was fundamentally predicated upon saving human lives,¹¹⁸⁶ protecting human rights,¹¹⁸⁷ cooperation,¹¹⁸⁸ and ultimately, peacekeeping.¹¹⁸⁹ As such, the favourable public opinion regarding participation, resulted from the salience of humanitarian concerns, per civilian power role expectations, rather than indicated evolving understandings of power and force per se.¹¹⁹⁰ In this manner, although some have cited German participation in the Balkans conflict as both a turning point towards embracing a military role,¹¹⁹¹ as well as the emergence of *normalisation* in German foreign policy and interest, at the expense of civilian power accounts,¹¹⁹² Germany’s behaviour in this case, was in fact, still attributable to “normative” factors, rather than rationalist interests.¹¹⁹³

¹¹⁸² Philippi, 55.; Wildenthal, 1052.

¹¹⁸³ Markovits and Reich, 146-47.; Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 63.; Harnisch and Maull, 151.

¹¹⁸⁴ Baumann and Hellmann, "Germany and the Use of Military Force: 'Total War', the 'Culture of Restraint' and the Quest for Normality," 63.; Pradetto, 24.

¹¹⁸⁵ 24.

¹¹⁸⁶ Sebastian Harnisch, "German Non-Proliferation Policy and the Iraq Conflict," *German Politics* 13, no. 1 (2004): 24.; Philippi, 55.; Baumann and Hellmann, "Germany and the Use of Military Force: 'Total War', the 'Culture of Restraint' and the Quest for Normality," 76-77.

¹¹⁸⁷ Philippi, 62-65.; Wittlinger and Larose, 488.

¹¹⁸⁸ Rainer Baumann and Gunther Hellmann, "Germany and the Use of Military Force: 'Total War', the 'Culture of Restraint' and the Quest for Normality," *ibid.* 10, no. 1 (2001): 76-77.; Philippi, 62-65.

¹¹⁸⁹ Pradetto, 19.

¹¹⁹⁰ Maull, "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 63.; "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 10.

¹¹⁹¹ Philippi, 49.; Harnisch and Maull, 106.

¹¹⁹² Harnisch, "German Non-Proliferation Policy and the Iraq Conflict," 1.; Martin Wagener, "Normalization in Security Policy?: Deployments of Bundeswehr Forces Abroad in the Era Schröder, 1998-2004," in *Germany's Uncertain Power?: Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, ed. Hanns Maull (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 79-84.; Baumann and Hellmann, "Germany and the Use of Military Force: 'Total War', the 'Culture of Restraint' and the Quest for Normality," 62-77.; Ruth Wittlinger and Martin Larose, "No Future for Germany's Past? Collective Memory and German Foreign Policy," *ibid.* 16, no. 4 (2007): 485.

¹¹⁹³ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 704-05.; Wittlinger and Larose, 486.; Pradetto, 26.; Harnisch and Maull, 119-20.

Critically, in functioning as such, rather than indicate meaningful change regarding its role concept, and use of force, a now legally empowered Germany's behaviour in this instance, instead reinforced civilian power accounts of German foreign policy, identity, and interest,¹¹⁹⁴ in which despite a willingness to participate under exceptional circumstances, Germany, in general, continued to exhibit an abhorrence of using military force,¹¹⁹⁵ and eagerly strived to reach a political and diplomatic solution throughout conflict in the Balkans.¹¹⁹⁶ Importantly, in doing so, this event further confirmed a key feature of Germany's adherence to the civilian power role concept: one in which political and diplomatic solutions are always sought, even when seemingly unavoidable conflict emerges. This precedent is critical, and as will be demonstrated later in the chapter, is particularly important in order to fully understand how Germany's policy towards Iran, may reflect an interest of avoiding use of military force.

Conflict in the Balkans was not the only case for which consideration of military action in the post-unification era highlighted a continued German interest in avoiding use of military force. Although Germany became an active coalition partner in Afghanistan –per former Chancellor Schröder's declaration of “‘unconditional solidarity’” with the United States (U.S.) in the fight against terror– and a German “consensus [that] action [...] against terrorist” threats is fully acceptable emerged,¹¹⁹⁷ its divergent position from the U.S. regarding the invasion of Iraq remains informative of their position towards using force. In the case of Iraq, Germany's intent to categorically reject military action¹¹⁹⁸ was so strong, it is often cited in German policy documents, as well as scholarship, as the “first” instance of true German assertiveness, and discord in post-unification relations with the U.S.¹¹⁹⁹ Notwithstanding the fact chapter three evidenced discord over Iran policy vis-à-vis the U.S., in fact predates this supposed, initial instance, Germany's opposition remains profoundly significant in this case, as the very essence

¹¹⁹⁴ Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 705.; Maull, "German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a 'Civilian Power?'," 13-14.; "Germany and the Use of Force: Still a 'Civilian Power'?", 56-72.; Baumann and Hellmann, "Germany and the Use of Military Force: 'Total War', the 'Culture of Restraint' and the Quest for Normality," 71-72.; Berger, 345.

¹¹⁹⁵ Markovits and Reich, 143.

¹¹⁹⁶ Harnisch and Maull, 109.; Baumann and Hellmann, "Germany and the Use of Military Force: 'Total War', the 'Culture of Restraint' and the Quest for Normality," 76.

¹¹⁹⁷ Sebastian Harnisch, "German Non-Proliferation Policy and the Iraq Conflict," *ibid.* 13 (2004): 1-10.

¹¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

¹¹⁹⁹ Bundestag, "Die Nahostpolitik Deutschlands Und Russlands Seit 1991," 5.; Harnisch, "German Non-Proliferation Policy and the Iraq Conflict," 11.; Szabo, "Parting Ways: The German-American Relationship after Iraq," 124.

of German opposition towards military action in Iraq, and its assertiveness to that end, underscores a “clash of strategic cultures” over military force.¹²⁰⁰

Specifically, the clash itself reflected that in contrast to a U.S. willingness to use force in the case of Iraq,¹²⁰¹ Germany’s military culture as a civilian power, engendered the staunch opposition,¹²⁰² in which “large segments of German society” opposed military action based on “ideational factors”, and instead, espoused interest in a “peaceful solution”.¹²⁰³ In this manner, despite claims Schröder’s calculus of opposition reflected mere electoral considerations,¹²⁰⁴ by mirroring these empirically evidenced beliefs, Germany’s behaviour appeared not only to demonstrate its continued civilian power interest of avoiding use of force, but in turn, further established a behavioural precedent of a civilian power Germany *assertively* assuming a foreign policy position, based upon an identity and interest of seeking peaceful solutions, in lieu of conflict. As will be demonstrated later in the chapter, this further precedent regarding civilian power interest is particularly illuminating, when considering the extent to which Germany’s relationship with Iran, may be explained by this facet of the civilian power role concept.

But regarding the previously stated questions of potential change in civilian power identity, and interest, in a more generalised context, although many posit change has occurred in Germany’s policy and receptiveness to utilizing force in the post-unification era,¹²⁰⁵ all instances of German military participation appear consistent with civilian power role expectations and interests. A cultural, identity-based, abhorrence of military solutions is noted to endure within wider German society,¹²⁰⁶ and as such, memory concerning the “past”, continues to define German interest through an “antimilitaris[t] approac[h]” to foreign policy, and “societal preferences for peaceful, diplomatic” solutions to conflict.¹²⁰⁷ Based upon this, it

¹²⁰⁰ "Parting Ways: The German-American Relationship after Iraq," 128.

¹²⁰¹ Peter Rudolf, "The Transatlantic Relationship: A View from Germany," *ibid.*, 143.; Stephen Szabo, "Parting Ways: The German-American Relationship after Iraq," *ibid.*, 128.; Harnisch, "German Non-Proliferation Policy and the Iraq Conflict," 5.

¹²⁰² Szabo, "Parting Ways: The German-American Relationship after Iraq," 128.

¹²⁰³ Harnisch, "German Non-Proliferation Policy and the Iraq Conflict," 2-16.

¹²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹²⁰⁵ Rainer Baumann and Gunther Hellmann, "Germany and the Use of Military Force: 'Total War', the 'Culture of Restraint' and the Quest for Normality," *ibid.* 10 (2001): 68.; Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 703.; Harnisch and Maull, 114.; Harnisch, "German Non-Proliferation Policy and the Iraq Conflict," 1.; Wagener, 79.

¹²⁰⁶ Harnisch, "German Non-Proliferation Policy and the Iraq Conflict," 19-24.

¹²⁰⁷ "Germany and Eu Foreign Policy," 10.

would be expected Germany's role behaviour as a civilian power, is similarly reflected in its relationship with Iran, to the extent themes of utilizing force manifest themselves in that context. Yet, more than this alone, it is imperative to appreciate the enduring civilian power aversion to use of force, is also expected to manifest itself through "arms control and non-proliferation" efforts,¹²⁰⁸ which are themselves, consistent with "its role conception as a civilian [...] 'pacifist' power."¹²⁰⁹

Thus, regarding a key question emergent from the previous chapter, the identity-based determination to curb, or at times, sever, trade and commercial relations, is, indeed, an expected feature of a civilian power Germany in avoiding use of force through its policy towards Iran. In this regard, there is a high-degree of confidence demonstrable effects of this civilian power role concept facet exist in the relationship, and serve to explain *some* aspects of the ties. However, based upon the wider, generalised expectations, now elaborated, this naturally provokes a necessary consideration of the *full* extent to which this facet of the civilian power role concept may explain the specific case of Germany's relationship with Iran. With this in mind, it is now necessary, once again, to turn attention towards the relationship.

6.4 A German Strategy for Peaceful Interests?

As established by the preceding chapter, at the time of unification, increased concern emerged over the appropriateness of trading in weapons, and dual-use technology, given its apparent challenge to German identity, and relatedly, interest.¹²¹⁰ Moreover, as this chapter has indicated, the particular identity in question, mirrors a facet of the civilian power role concept. In this manner, it is revealing to consider that following Iran's Islamic Revolution of 1979, German policy *interest*, resulted in strong weapons-based export controls in trade with Iran, entailing a full cessation of trade in military goods,¹²¹¹ and a severing of all military-related contacts.¹²¹² Given this shift occurred despite an evidenced interest in commercial and trade

¹²⁰⁸ Meier, 70-81.

¹²⁰⁹ Nicholas Wright, "Countering Proliferation: The Iran Nuclear Negotiations (2002-15)," in *The Eu's Common Foreign and Security Policy in Germany and the UK: Co-Operation, Co-Optation and Competition*, New Perspectives in German Political Studies (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), Location 5469 (electronic version).

¹²¹⁰ Refer to chapter five.

¹²¹¹ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 147-48. Mousavian, 201.

¹²¹² Pinto, 102.

relations –even after 1979–¹²¹³ policy choices such as this remain emblematic of how, notwithstanding substantive economic interests, Germany's identity-based interest as a civilian power, has a demonstrable effect, which transcends rationalist, and materialist explanations alone. This dynamic is both consistent, and easily discernible in the post-unification era, with policy documents from the 1990s to present-day, reflecting that despite robust trade and commercial relations, Germany remains wholeheartedly committed to avoiding any "military use" and "dual-use" trade with Iran.¹²¹⁴ Accordingly, and as chapter five evidenced, discourse is unambiguous: German concern over use of force not only has demonstrable effects on an otherwise economic interest behind relationship, but it establishes a meaningful hierarchy of interests.

But although this dynamic may be clear from analysis of the relationship in an economic context, what remains less apparent, is the extent to which an interest concerning use of force, has demonstrable effects *beyond* the scope of curtailing economic interests. In this regard, it is significant to appreciate concern over potential use of force, and a related preoccupation over challenges to peace, thematically manifest well beyond the scope of trade and commercial relations alone. Beginning as early as February 1991, concern over potential use of force emerged as an area of discussion between newly unified Germany, and Iran –at the time based upon shared concern that Iraq's invasion of Kuwait would escalate–¹²¹⁵ and in doing so, from the relationship's post-unification inception, German opposition to using military force appeared as a central theme within the relationship's narrative. Of far greater significance for understanding the relationship, however, rather than emerge as a trend of agreement between the two states, Germany's interest in peaceful solutions to conflict, has largely constituted an area of profound disagreement with Tehran, leading to concern in Germany over Iran's challenges towards interests of securing regional peace, and preventing military conflict.¹²¹⁶ In this manner, it is, in fact, the centrality of divergent interests from Iran regarding regional peace and stability, which in turn, have given added salience to German interest beyond the

¹²¹³ Refer to chapter five.

¹²¹⁴ Bundesregierung, "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Drucksache 13/3483," 4-5.; "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Die Europäisch-Iranische Handelsbank Und Die Deutsche Handelspolitik Gegenüber Dem Iran," 8.; Energie, "Iran –Wirtschaftliche Beziehungen."

¹²¹⁵ Mousavian, 23-24.

¹²¹⁶ Ibid., 77-80.

economic realm, and critically, as such, further encouraged a German belief that a strategy of “dialogue could eliminate these problems.”¹²¹⁷ In this respect, even more than a central theme, the prominence of a German *interest* in preventing use of force, may very well have demonstrable effects in terms of shaping the overall form of its policy strategy. But to what extent is this true?

To consider this matter further, it is essential to recall the findings of chapter three, in which it was noted Germany’s approach to bilateral relations with Iran, exists in terms of a firm commitment to pursuing *dialogue*¹²¹⁸—a strategy for which Germany remains the strongest advocate.¹²¹⁹ Although chapter three did not precisely define what interests might underlie this commitment—instead discussing its attributes—it is important to recall the German interest in pursuing dialogue towards Iran, largely functioned in stark contrast to Washington’s approach.¹²²⁰ In this respect, and mirroring Germany’s oppositional position concerning the Iraq War, while successive administrations in Washington aimed to sanction and isolate Tehran,¹²²¹ conversely, the German way of thinking held a general aversion to implementing sanctions,¹²²² and from its inception in 1991, exhibited a consistent narrative in support of diplomacy.¹²²³ In doing so, Germany’s pursuit of dialogue not only “served as a vehicle for [...] major issues” specifically relating to use of force, such as regional peace, and concern over Iran’s acquisition of weapons,¹²²⁴ but importantly, it encouraged a perception that Germany was “the main defender of the diplomatic and non-military approach” towards Iran, *because* of its commitment to a dialogue approach.¹²²⁵

But although the *effect* of Germany’s strategy produced such a belief, for purposes of explaining the relationship, in its entirety, the imperative question is: what interest actually underlies this commitment to dialogue? And, relatedly, to what extent might this interest be

¹²¹⁷ Ibid., 80.

¹²¹⁸ Refer to chapter three.

¹²¹⁹ Müller, 60.; Reissner, 36.; Perthes, 11.; Mousavian, 76.; Reissner, 48.

¹²²⁰ Refer to chapter three.

¹²²¹ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 159.; Pinto, 101-04.; Mousavian, 34-35.; Lane, 77.

¹²²² Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, ix.

¹²²³ Ibid., 170.

¹²²⁴ Mousavian, 134.

¹²²⁵ Ibid., 154.

explained by a civilian power desire to avoid use of force, and pursue political solutions? In order to address these questions, it is necessary to consider once again, the specific philosophy underpinning this strategy, and its related calculus.

To this point, it is revealing to consider that despite initial public concern in Germany over establishing ties with Iran,¹²²⁶ German public opinion nevertheless expressed a strong scepticism of the U.S. strategy towards Iran, because it exhibited notable philosophical differences from Germany's,¹²²⁷ and accordingly, provoked questions of efficacy.¹²²⁸ In this manner, it would appear the answer to questions of underlying interest in dialogue, exist in terms of differing cultural philosophies –similar to the noted difference between Germany's military culture, and that of the U.S. Consequently, it is valuable to recognise the essence of philosophical beliefs underpinning these strong opinions in the German public, are discernible from consideration of the *Ostpolitik* antecedents of Germany's belief in dialogue. As noted previously, in chapter three, the emergence of an *Ostpolitik* strategy during the 1970s was a seminal moment of assertiveness in West German foreign policy,¹²²⁹ and at its philosophic core, existed a belief that pursuing dialogue was central to resolving conflict, and economic sanctioning was ineffective.¹²³⁰ Finding its impetus from the influence of historical, as well as collective memories,¹²³¹ Germany's pursuit of *Ostpolitik*, and its corresponding rejection of economic pressure mechanisms, bespoke a moralistic perspective,¹²³² and affirmed a "normative aspect of Germany's post-war foreign policy."¹²³³ More specifically, however, the core of moral interest inherent in *Ostpolitik* was, in fact, "support for non-military means of [...] ensuring security", which "reinforced [...] antimilitary" attitudes in West Germany.¹²³⁴ Not only was the policy predicated upon a desire to mitigate possible military conflict, but public support for an *Ostpolitik* strategy increased over time, *because* it was considered a

¹²²⁶ Reissner, 39.; Perthes, 11.

¹²²⁷ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 173.

¹²²⁸ Ibid., 241.

¹²²⁹ Markovits and Reich, 32.

¹²³⁰ Lane, 78.; Mousavian, 201.; Rudolf and Kemp, 3.

¹²³¹ Berger, 341.; Reissner, 39.

¹²³² Paterson, "Helmut Kohl, 'the Vision Thing' and Escaping the Semi-Sovereignty Trap," 23.

¹²³³ Harnisch and Maull, 2.

¹²³⁴ Berger, 340-41.

fundamental rejection of utilizing force,¹²³⁵ and underscored a public preference for diplomatic solutions.¹²³⁶

In this regard, an *Ostpolitik*-inspired dialogue, is, at its philosophic core, emblematic of an identity-based interest of pursuing a *politics, not force*, approach to foreign policy.

Consequently, it not only appears highly informative that an *Ostpolitik*-inspired approach is central to Germany's policy towards Iran,¹²³⁷ but that the strong philosophic differences underlying German public opposition to the U.S. approach, are at their essence, based upon a once philosophic affirmation of antimilitarist interest in German foreign policy efforts. In this sense, more than merely an *effect* of dialogue, an antimilitarist interest as a civilian power, may very well constitute a *cause* of Germany's choice of dialogue. However, in order to determine whether, and to what extent, this is the case, it is necessary to consider whether evidence establishes confidence in such conclusions. Helpfully, in this regard, discourse surrounding the relationship may offer an answer.

6.4.1 Discourse, Policy Choices, and Concern Over Use of Force

As noted earlier in this chapter, it was, at the very least, envisaged that dialogue could potentially serve to bridge differences with Iran over peace and security in the Middle East. In this manner, there appeared to exist a discernible benefit from pursuing a dialogue approach, in terms of mitigating potential use of force, even if indirect. Yet, insightfully, consideration of discourse during the post-unification relationship indicates concern over use of force may very well represent a central interest behind the choice of sustaining a dialogue strategy. Beginning in the 1990s, concern emerged in Germany that Israel or the U.S. might launch a military strike against Iran.¹²³⁸ German policy documents unambiguously reference a preeminent concern that use of force might occur against Iran.¹²³⁹ In fact, they specifically

¹²³⁵ Ibid., 340-46.

¹²³⁶ Yoder, 195-96.

¹²³⁷ Lane, 77-78.; Mousavian, 201.; Rudolf and Kemp, 3.; Reissner, 48.

¹²³⁸ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 210.; Mousavian, 172.; Deutscher Bundestag, "Eskalation Im Atomkonflikt Mit Dem Iran Verhindern," (2007).

¹²³⁹ "Eskalation Im Atomkonflikt Mit Dem Iran Verhindern," 1.; "Weiter Verhandeln – Kein Militäreinsatz Gegen Den Iran," (2006), 1-2.; "Keine Militärische Eskalation Gegenüber Dem Iran – Konflikt Um Das Atomprogramm Mit Verhandlungen Lösen," (2007), 1-2.

bespeak an additional fear that mere “threat of military means can [...] hinder a peaceful resolution” of disputes with Iran.¹²⁴⁰ In this sense, discourse surrounding the relationship is clear, beginning in earlier years of the post-unification relationship, a preoccupation appeared in Germany over potential for use of military force against Iran, and as such, the prominence of this issue indicates an underlying interest on the issue. But although an interest in preventing use of force may be visible from these statements, what is less apparent, is whether this interest, in turn, explains continued implementation of a dialogue approach.

Regarding this question, it is helpful to consider policy statements demonstrate a consistent desire for negotiations, rather than military intervention against Iran.¹²⁴¹ Not only did members of the *Bundestag*, explicitly “call on the United States of America” to forego any “military measures against Iran”,¹²⁴² but these statements further elaborate that a desire to mitigate potential use of force through “diplomatic efforts”¹²⁴³ occurs, because consideration of military methods are “counterproductive” to German interests in this context.¹²⁴⁴ As stated by Chancellor Angela Merkel, Germany “hold[s] any form of military solution as absolutely inappropriate and put[s] forth diplomatic efforts”,¹²⁴⁵ whereby more than a question of efficacy, the aversion to military methods is fundamentally predicated upon a logic of *appropriateness*, consistent with constructivist understandings of interest formation.¹²⁴⁶ This interpretation of interest, underlying German policy towards Iran, is further bolstered by public opinion data, which noted in 2007 –at a time of particular concern in Germany that Iran might become a second Iraq–¹²⁴⁷ that 75% of the German public was opposed to any military action against Iran, even provided diplomatic initiatives at the time failed to produce a

¹²⁴⁰ "Eskalation Im Atomkonflikt Mit Dem Iran Verhindern," 1.

¹²⁴¹ "Weiter Verhandeln – Kein Militäreinsatz Gegen Den Iran," 1.; "Für Ein Friedliches Vorgehen Im Konflikt Über Das Iranische Atomprogramm – Demokratische Entwicklung Unterstützen," (2006), 1-4.; Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 197.; Belkin, 13.

¹²⁴² Bundestag, "Weiter Verhandeln – Kein Militäreinsatz Gegen Den Iran," 1.

¹²⁴³ "Keine Militärische Eskalation Gegenüber Dem Iran – Konflikt Um Das Atomprogramm Mit Verhandlungen Lösen," 2-3.; Bundesregierung, "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Haltung Der Bundesregierung Zu Wirtschaftssanktionen Gegenüber Dem Iran Und Deren Auswirkung Auf Deutsche Unternehmen," 1.; Deutscher Bundestag, "Regierung: Iran, Nordkorea Und Syrien Gefährden Internationale Sicherheit," news release, 2013, https://www.bundestag.de/presse/hib/2013_03/02/253188.; Wittlinger, "The Merkel Government's Politics of the Past."

¹²⁴⁴ Bundestag, "Keine Militärische Eskalation Gegenüber Dem Iran – Konflikt Um Das Atomprogramm Mit Verhandlungen Lösen," 2.

¹²⁴⁵ "Iran Droht Trump Mit “Resoluter Antwort“, " *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 21, 2017 2017.

¹²⁴⁶ Refer to chapter two.

¹²⁴⁷ Bundestag, "Eskalation Im Atomkonflikt Mit Dem Iran Verhindern."

satisfactory outcome.¹²⁴⁸ Based upon this calculus, as German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas presents it, the German government is therefore interested in “working against every military escalation, and to fight on every level for political solutions.”¹²⁴⁹

With expression of these non-rationalist, non-materialist calculations, discourse accordingly indicates a clear German interest in pursuing a *politics, not force* approach in relations with Iran. But of equal importance, policy statements further serve to acknowledge that for German policymakers, the very rationale for continued implementation of “intensive dialogue”, is attributable to its underlying interest in pursuing diplomatic efforts,¹²⁵⁰ by means of “civilian instruments”.¹²⁵¹ In other words, not only is avoiding use of force evidenced by discourse to constitute a preeminent interest of post-unification German foreign policy towards Iran, but the decision to sustain a dialogue approach, predicated upon understandings of appropriateness, is directly attributed to this interest. In this manner, from a discourse perspective, dialogue in the case of Iran relations, appears emblematic of a wider “ideational [...] preference for diplomatic [...] instruments” and abhorrence of using force, considered both intrinsic to the philosophical underpinnings of Germany’s past dialogues,¹²⁵² and consistent with civilian power explanations.

Yet, beyond discourse itself, to what extent does this identity-based interest as a civilian power, have a demonstrable effect in shaping dialogue policy itself? In other words: does policy *action*, in fact, mirror this stated interest within discourse? For such questions, it is helpful to recall that a central feature of Germany’s *Ostpolitik*-inspired dialogue, entails a general aversion to economic sanctions.¹²⁵³ It is accordingly insightful that concurrent to its rhetoric of opposition towards using military options in Iran policy, Germany has, as a general trend, endeavoured through policy actions, to oppose economic sanctions against Tehran.¹²⁵⁴ Considering the findings of the preceding chapter, including Germany’s strong opposition

¹²⁴⁸ Jones.

¹²⁴⁹ Alexander Heinrich, "Wettlauf Mit Waffen," *Das Parlament*, April 23, 2018 2018.

¹²⁵⁰ Bundestag, "Keine Militärische Eskalation Gegenüber Dem Iran – Konflikt Um Das Atomprogramm Mit Verhandlungen Lösen," 3.

¹²⁵¹ "Für Ein Friedliches Vorgehen Im Konflikt Über Das Iranische Atomprogramm –Demokratische Entwicklung Unterstützen," 1.

¹²⁵² Harnisch, "Germany and Eu Foreign Policy," 16.

¹²⁵³ Refer to chapters three, four, and five.

¹²⁵⁴ Küntzel, *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 197.

towards limitations on its trade and commercial ties with Iran,¹²⁵⁵ it might be natural to assume this policy choice is attributable to a desire for maximizing economic potential. Despite this potential explanation, however, German policy statements have often expressed in relation to such action, a fundamental concern that imposing sanctions against Iran could precipitate conflict.¹²⁵⁶ Such statements have underscored a belief “sanctions against Iran further contribute to the aggravation of the situation,”¹²⁵⁷ and even labelled them “conflict increasing sanctions”.¹²⁵⁸ Given the prominence and prevalence of such sentiments, it would appear the policy decision to generally oppose implementation of sanctions, as part of an *Ostpolitik*-inspired dialogue, is in part, attributable to German antimilitarist interests, rather than merely ascribable to economic interests of maintaining an open marketplace alone.

Not only is interest in diplomatic alternatives to military force incontrovertibly evidenced in relation to features of Germany’s *Ostpolitik*-inspired dialogue, but the conviction to sustain implementation of dialogue policy –in the face of marginal success for most stated goals of dialogue¹²⁵⁹– suggests the perceived efficacy of this policy approach, must rest elsewhere. In this manner, a diplomatic, and non-military interest, represents a highly probable explanation of Germany’s policy, including the more unilateral, if not assertive, pursuit of non-military policy towards Iran,¹²⁶⁰ previously discussed in chapter three.¹²⁶¹ After all, policy documents acknowledge that for Germany, divergent policy from multilateral positions often underscores “it’s not always simple [...] to find a unified position [...] particularly given potential military engagement”.¹²⁶² It would therefore appear interest in avoiding use of force –as captured by discourse, and pursuant to civilian power role expectations– serves to explain many of Germany’s policy choices in the relationship, which occur beyond immediate economic interests. Moreover, it does so without leaving any pieces of the puzzle out.

¹²⁵⁵ Refer to chapter five.

¹²⁵⁶ Bundestag, "Iran: Teherans Hegemoniale Und Nukleare Interessen Und Die Haltung Der Internationalen Gemeinschaft," 15.; Jones.

¹²⁵⁷ Bundestag, "Eskalation Im Atomkonflikt Mit Dem Iran Verhindern," 2.

¹²⁵⁸ "Weiter Verhandeln – Kein Militäreinsatz Gegen Den Iran," 1.

¹²⁵⁹ Refer to chapters three through five.

¹²⁶⁰ Harnisch, "Germany and Eu Foreign Policy," 12.; Küntzel, "Germany and a Nuclear Iran," 55.

¹²⁶¹ Refer to chapter three.

¹²⁶² Bundestag, "Die Nahostpolitik Deutschlands Und Russlands Seit 1991," 6.

Yet, despite the compelling potential of this explanation behind Germany's actions in support of sustaining dialogue, including a general philosophical opposition to sanctions, Germany has also, at times, exhibited a curious willingness to implement sanctions, and economic embargoes against Iran.¹²⁶³ In this manner, if policy steps to oppose sanctions serve to evidence an interest in avoiding use of force, as an explanation of the relationship, it would then be logical to assume support for sanctions initiatives, albeit less often, downgrades confidence that Germany's implementation of *Ostpolitik*-inspired dialogue, is in fact attributable to a civilian power interest of avoiding use of force. Interestingly, however, as similarly noted in preceding chapters, there also appears to be a strong correlation between Germany's change in policy towards limited sanctions implementation, and concern over use of force.¹²⁶⁴ Insightfully, policy documents clearly articulate the rationale underpinning this potential contradiction in stated interests, by noting a belief that under particular circumstances, implementation of sanctions functions "to serve a peaceful aim".¹²⁶⁵ Elaborating further upon this calculus, documents underscore a belief "sanctions measures [...] can successfully result in diplomatic resolution" of disputes with Iran,¹²⁶⁶ and if necessary for continued advancement of diplomacy and peace, sanctions measures are thereby central to a dialogue strategy, rather than suggestive of a movement away from this approach.¹²⁶⁷ Thus, ironically, the policy choice to implement sanctions under limited circumstances, is not only predicated upon the same concern over use of force invoked by Germany in its more common opposition to sanctions, but such policy action is further presented as a proof point of this interest.

But if both opposition to, and endorsement of sanctions are emblematic of a desire for political solutions, then at what point does Germany's policy shift towards favouring economic sanctions occur, and how does such a shift advance explanation of Germany's policy interest in this relationship? Helpfully, expanding upon the articulated desire for a diplomatic

¹²⁶³ Refer to chapters three and five.

¹²⁶⁴ Refer to chapters three and five.

¹²⁶⁵ Bundestag, "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Sanktionspolitik Und Wirtschaftssembargo Gegen Den Iran — Drucksache 17/10508," 3.; Bundesregierung, "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Das Iranische Atomprogramm Und Die Verhängung Von Sanktionen Seitens Der Eu Gegen Iran," 2-6.

¹²⁶⁶ Bundestag, "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Sanktionspolitik Und Wirtschaftssembargo Gegen Den Iran — Drucksache 17/10508," 6.

¹²⁶⁷ "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Die Iran Politik Der Bundesregierung, Drucksache 16/5533," 1.

solution through such measures, policy documents indicate a change towards sanctions often correlates with elevated concern force might be used vis-à-vis Iran.¹²⁶⁸ In this manner, the catalyst for supporting sanctions appears to result from palpable fear that military measures are an increasingly distinct possibility, suggesting Germany alters their position on sanctions at times, *because* they fear not doing so could precipitate a conflict.

The narrative surrounding Germany's relationship with Iran appears to support this interpretation, in which policy statements note: "all activities [...] serve the hindrance of a military escalation",¹²⁶⁹ and sanctions are themselves presented as a manifestation of this interest.¹²⁷⁰ Documents critically state that although sanctions-free "negotiations" are preferred, "provided this remains unsuccessful –non-military sanctions are the only justifiable way".¹²⁷¹ Accordingly, in a striking parallel to the ideational and normative underpinnings of a civilian power identity, concern over justifiability, and legitimacy, present themselves as a shaping force in policy implementation. As Germany's former Ambassador to Tehran, Paul Freiherr von Maltzahn, explains it, for Germany, "it would be wrong to follow the motto 'keep all your options open' because this includes the possibility of a military strike."¹²⁷² Thus, notwithstanding a strong preference to avoid implementation of sanctions, per the philosophic underpinnings of an *Ostpolitik*-inspired dialogue, when the alternative appears to be military action, sanctions are envisaged as "the price that has to be paid" for peace,¹²⁷³ and German policy becomes one of "as few sanctions as possible [...] to avoid [...] [a] military attack."¹²⁷⁴

In this regard, interest in avoiding use of force appears to hold particular salience and influence upon German policy towards Iran. In fact, one of the few consistent issue areas in which Germany does express particular concern over Iran's machinations, and relatedly conveys a desire to pursue a tougher stance on sanctions policy towards Tehran, is that of

¹²⁶⁸ Heinrich.; Bundestag, "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Sanktionspolitik Und Wirtschaftssembargo Gegen Den Iran — Drucksache 17/10508," 1-2.

¹²⁶⁹ "Antwort Der Bundesregierung: Sanktionspolitik Und Wirtschaftssembargo Gegen Den Iran — Drucksache 17/10508," 12.

¹²⁷⁰ Küntzel, "Germany and a Nuclear Iran," 52.

¹²⁷¹ Bundestag, "Für Ein Friedliches Vorgehen Im Konflikt Über Das Iranische Atomprogramm — Demokratische Entwicklung Unterstützen," 1.

¹²⁷² Küntzel, "Germany and a Nuclear Iran," 55.

¹²⁷³ *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 241.

¹²⁷⁴ "Germany and a Nuclear Iran," 52.; *Germany and Iran: From the Aryan Axis to the Nuclear Threshold*, 241.

Iran's missile program¹²⁷⁵ –a clear manifestation of potential use of force. In this manner, despite potential contradictions, it is clear the underlying *interest*, which *explains* Germany's curious policy shifts between opposing, and endorsing sanctions as part of its commitment to dialogue, is a preference for political solutions, and abhorrence of using force. This, in turn, confirms the anticipated interests of a civilian power Germany. Moreover, it is profoundly significant that concern over use of force is central to both opposition, as well as support for, sanctions, because although opposition to sanctions could be attributable to economic interests, support for them certainly is not. Consequently, not only does this evidenced interest have demonstrable effects upon Germany's policy action towards Iran, but the centrality of this interest, amidst policy changes, only further serves to upgrade confidence that concern over use of force is more than simple rhetoric designed to obfuscate economic interests, it is a definitive interest itself.

But although the *interest* appears consistent with that of civilian power role expectations, does support for sanctions present any challenge to the expected *behaviour* of one? Interestingly, for a civilian power Germany, sanctions are not, in fact, a refutation of civilian power interests. Although a general aversion to sanctions –as exhibited by Germany in its pursuit of an *Ostpolitik*-inspired dialogue– is evidenced to bespeak underlying interests of a civilian power, sanctions, nevertheless, remain a tool at the disposal of an ideal civilian power.¹²⁷⁶

Although this may appear contradictory, the reason is in fact revealing. As sanctions constitute “the most powerful instruments of a civilian power”,¹²⁷⁷ the implication is: sanctions, for a civilian power, are effectively the last resort in efforts to advance civilian power policy interests. In this manner, far from challenging the expected role behaviour of a civilian power, that Germany demonstrates a general aversion to sanctions, but at critical instances in which it appears use force is imminent, evidences a willingness to implement them, is actually strikingly consistent with that of a civilian power explanation. As noted by former German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel, Germany feels it “must do everything to prevent a

¹²⁷⁵ "Härterer Kurs: Deutschland Erwägt Offenbar Neue Iran-Sanktionen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 20, 2017 2018.; Seibert.; Christian Böhme and Kevin P. Hoffmann, "Wie Die Europäer Versuchen, Den Atomdeal Zu Retten," *ibid.*, April 25, 2018.; "Der Präsident Entscheidet Über Die Strafzölle," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 27, 2018 2018.

¹²⁷⁶ Harnisch and Maull, 106-56.

¹²⁷⁷ Pfeil, 101.

subsequent worst-case-scenario: [...] a military attack",¹²⁷⁸ and with such a civilian power interest at stake, shifting policy towards sanctions is not only emblematic of expected interest underlying a civilian power, it is the expected behaviour of one.

Conclusion

Based upon evidence presented in this chapter, there is a high-degree of confidence the fourth, and final facet of Germany's civilian power role concept as envisaged by this thesis –a commitment to avoiding use of force, and preference for diplomatic, or political solutions– has demonstrable effects upon Germany's relationship with Iran, beyond the explanatory scope of rationalist, and materialist accounts alone.

This chapter began by establishing the manner in which concern over use of force, and a preference for diplomatic, or political solutions, emerged as a key feature of post-war German foreign policy, identity, and interest, manifested in the civilian power role concept. Following this, the chapter demonstrated that notwithstanding a perceived change in German policy towards use of force in the post-unification era, Germany's civilian power role concept, and inherent concern over use of force as such, nevertheless endure as a core interest of German foreign policy. This further allowed for the clear articulation of expected behaviour of a committed civilian power Germany in this area, for its relations with Iran.

With these considerations in mind, the chapter evidenced, through consideration of both discourse, as well as policy action, that Germany's identity-based commitment as a civilian power to avoiding use of force, not only explains its willingness to curb or stymie trade and commercial relations, but the manifestation of this interest, extends well beyond the economic sphere alone, and serves to explain Germany's enduring commitment to an *Ostpolitik*-inspired form of dialogue. In doing so, this chapter demonstrates that despite an ability for trade and commercial relations to explain *most* of the relationship, Germany's civilian power role concept, nevertheless remains the final arbiter of German interest, and relatedly, policy, towards Iran. In this manner, Germany's fourth, and final facet of the civilian power role concept, is capable of explaining the remaining features of German policy towards Iran, and

¹²⁷⁸ Julia Amalia Heyer et al., "Das Ultimatum," *Der Spiegel*, April 28, 2018 2018.

accordingly, supports a civilian power explanation of German foreign policy and interest in this case, *albeit* far more limited in scope than would be expected. In other words, Germany's policy towards Iran, although largely evidenced to be explained by underlying economic interests, nevertheless finds such interests wholly contingent upon another, ultimate basis of interest, namely: the extent to which concern over use of force manifests itself in the context of the relationship. Consequently, although the findings of this chapter support and affirm a constructivist-inspired, civilian power explanation of *some* aspects of Germany's relationship with Iran, these findings do so with the acknowledgement a constructivist-inspired explanation is far more limited in explanatory scope than prevailing interpretations of post-unification German foreign policy, identity, and interest would anticipate.

Conclusion

Based upon consideration of the four distinct facets underlying Germany's civilian power role concept, this original perspective of research on Germany's relationship with Iran offers strong evidence in support of a new explanation. As noted previously, existing accounts of the relationship are few and far between, and largely present contradictory explanations of Germany's interest. For one school of thought, Germany's relationship with Iran bespeaks an economically driven Germany, indifferent to normative, and identity-based considerations. For another, Germany's relationship affirms a commitment to multilateralism, human rights, rule of law, and the advancement of diplomatic solutions to conflict. In this manner, the essence of such contradictions was shown to mirror differing theoretical and analytical explanations of Germany's interest in relations with Iran. However, despite recognition of fundamentally differing theoretical understandings of the relationship, prior to this thesis, no work had meaningfully addressed the bilateral relationship from any theoretical, or analytical perspective, and certainly not from the prevailing understanding of post-unification Germany, as a constructivist-inspired, civilian power.

This is significant, in that although a constructivist-inspired, civilian power role concept, ostensibly accounts for post-unification German foreign policy, identity and interest, fundamental questions have emerged concerning the continued validity of Germany's civilian power role concept in the post-unification era. In turn, this makes a discrete case study of this sort particularly valuable in a wider context, given that such *prevailing* civilian power explanations of German interest and policy, appear to be problematized in the context of Germany's under-evaluated relationship with Iran, amidst two seemingly antithetical explanations of its interest and behaviour. Two differing accounts of a case, which mirror a wider, fundamental question of whether post-unification Germany exhibits continuity as a civilian power, or appears as an increasingly normalised state. Accordingly, notwithstanding the tendency of existing literature to focus on a multilateral level of Germany's relations with Iran, there is particular value of addressing the relationship from this unique, bilateral level of investigation.

Amidst this profound gap in addressing the relationship, and bearing in mind these contradictions mirror wider, and pivotal debates regarding the continued validity of civilian power explanations of Germany, this shortcoming, in turn, necessitated further consideration of the extent to which such ties did in fact, challenge fundamental assumptions of post-unification German foreign policy, identity, and interest. In other words, before this study, not only did contradictory explanations of the relationship result from the absence of meaningful theoretical, or analytical perspectives, but this gap further meant the wider implications of this case study for questions of German foreign policy, identity, and interest, had gone unnoticed.

Such limitations to knowledge notwithstanding, the results of this thesis indicate a clear explanation of Germany's relationship with Iran does exist, and is best realised from the original perspective undertaken in this thesis. By utilizing the *constructivist-inspired, civilian power role concept*, as a theoretical framework, this thesis was able to establish clear role expectations of a civilian power Germany, in the form of diagnostic criteria. Used in conjunction with a *case-explaining, process-tracing methodology* –which aims to explain a puzzling case, by considering diagnostic criteria for a hypothesised causality– the civilian power theoretical framework allowed for a compelling explanation of this case to emerge, given its almost prescriptive expectations. Pursuant to such a theoretical framework, and corresponding methodology, it was noted that if Germany's relationship with Iran is explained by its underlying identity, and interest as a civilian power, the behaviour of Germany in this case, would evidence the demonstrable effects of at least one facet of a civilian power Germany, which as envisaged in this thesis, entails:

- A commitment to multilateralism and cooperation.
- Promotion of normative concerns –including human rights, rule of law, democratisation, and social justice– through bilateral relations, even if this stymies other interests.
- Norms and values superseding material interests.

- A belief that political and diplomatic solutions are optimal, and use of force is detested.

Approaching it from this unique perspective, role expectations were greatly challenged by Germany's evidenced willingness to assertively pursue its subjective interests in policy towards Iran, at the expense of partnerships considered central to Germany's post-war identity. Germany's role enactment in this context, served both to challenge the expectations of a civilian power concerning cooperation towards Iran in its policy, as well as critically, pinpointed an initial instance of post-unification German policy conflict with the U.S. – something existing scholarship posits did not actually occur until debate surrounding the Iraq War.

It was further indicated bilateral political and economic relations with Iran lacked true, or meaningful contingency upon concern over human rights, rule of law, and democratisation efforts, as such non-material, identity-based interests, were shown to be subservient to the intensification of trade and commercial relations. All this despite German cognizance of a regression in the state of Iranian human rights, rule of law, and democratisation –which severely downgraded confidence in its influence upon Germany's policy, similar to the multilateral, and cooperative facet.

In this context, there is a high-degree of confidence, that commercial and trade relations explain *most* of the relationship, and in doing so, this largely downgrades confidence that Germany's civilian power role concept –as currently understood– can explain the relationship. Nevertheless, despite the capacity for commercial and trade relations to explain most of Germany's interest in Iran relations, the thesis critically recognised that aspects of the relationship cannot be accounted for by such interests alone. In fact, it was clearly evidenced the economic interests of Germany in its relationship with Iran, are at times, curbed, or even stymied, by an identity-based interest of avoiding use of force, or precipitating use of force. Hence, although an economic explanation is well-evidenced, if these interests appear in conflict with this particular, identity-based interest of a non-economic basis, then an

explanation extends beyond the scope of commercial and trade interests alone. In functioning as such, Germany's core interest of trade and commercial relations is inherently *contingent*, upon a non-material, non-rationalist interest, attributed to Germany's identity.

Bearing this in mind, it was empirically demonstrated, that indeed, Germany's fourth facet as a civilian power –a belief that political and diplomatic solutions are optimal, and use of force is detested– accounts for the identity-based limitation to commercial and trade relations, and moreover, serves to explain Germany's particular determination to sustain an *Ostpolitik*-inspired, dialogue-based approach, towards Iran. Consequently, by leveraging this unique theoretical framework and methodology, this thesis evidenced clear, demonstrable effects of Germany's identity, and related interest, as a civilian power, upon the course of the relationship, beyond the economic scope alone. Given that economic interests were evidenced to come at the expense of three facets of the civilian power role concept, but were later demonstrated to remain strongly contingent upon identity-based interest formation, this, establishes a clear hierarchical picture of underlying interest, with sufficient evidence for an explanation of the relationship.

Taking these findings into account, there is a high-degree of confidence that Germany's relationship with Iran is mostly explained by economic interests, thereby challenging many fundamental assumptions of post-unification German foreign policy, identity, and interest. Yet, critically, despite these fundamental challenges to numerous facets of the civilian power role concept, it is nevertheless imperative to recognise such interests only account for Germany's policy towards Iran when peaceful solutions, and political instruments endure. When facing a dilemma of choosing between a course of action most conducive to trade and commercial interests, or that of preserving peace and diplomacy, Germany has clearly evidenced a preference for the latter in its post-unification relationship. In doing so, per the civilian power role concept, the final arbiter of Germany's relationship with Iran remains its identity-based concern over use of force, and a corresponding preference for political solutions.

Despite this, however, one must also recognise that beyond shaping its *Ostpolitik*-inspired, dialogue approach, the identity-based interest underlying Germany's policy, only manifests itself in limited instances of perceived conflict with economic interests, rather than such non-rationalist, non-materialist interests constituting the core impetus of the relationship. That is to say, commercial and trade relations merely remain *contingent* upon avoiding use of force, and a continuation of diplomacy, rather than use of force and political solutions being the preeminent causality of Germany's behaviour in the relationship. In demonstrating such a calculus, the findings of this thesis stand to alter existing understandings of the relationship, since prior to this study, accounts of the relations were largely mutually exclusive, in positing either an economic explanation, or a non-rationalist, non-materialist one.

Consequently, by approaching it from the unique perspective of expected behaviour of a civilian power Germany, this thesis evidences, with a high-degree of confidence, a new understanding. According to this understanding, although Germany's relationship with Iran is *mostly* explained by commercial and trade relations, and occurs at the expense of numerous facets of prevailing, civilian power explanations of Germany, these economic interests nevertheless remain contingent upon Germany's commitment to a lone facet of the civilian power role concept.

Based upon the assumptions of a constructivist-inspired, civilian power Germany, this new explanation appears to largely challenge wider, prevailing understandings of post-unification Germany, in which a multifaceted, identity-based interest formation, ostensibly supersedes traditional rationalist, or materialist aims, such as trade and commercial relations. Yet, despite evidencing such critical challenges to broader civilian power role expectations, as conveyed by the word *contingent*, these economic interests underlying the relationship, nevertheless remain conditional upon fulfilment of key identity-based interests, beyond the explanatory capacity of commercial and trade relations alone. Bearing in mind this thesis established a vital premise that affirming the civilian power role concept, merely required evidencing demonstrable effects of one facet of the civilian power role concept upon the relationship –based upon the diagnostic criteria envisaged in this investigation– Germany's civilian power role concept is, ultimately, affirmed, albeit far more limited in scope than would be expected.

With this explanation, although partially affirmed, fundamental assumptions of post-unification German foreign policy, identity, and interest, are severely challenged in the case of its post-unification relationship with Iran, amidst a clear disparity between policy implementation, and role expectations of a civilian power Germany. Importantly, not only were the interests underlying Germany's approach evidenced to contradict key, role expectations of a constructivist-inspired, civilian power actor, but the manner in which such interests were illustrated to come at the expense of three out of four civilian power role facets, establishes an indifference not explainable by non-rationalist interests –such as use of force– alone. In this manner, such an explanation of the relationship captures an assertive German policy approach towards Iran, in which key material interests underlie much of Germany's policy, and both bespeak more *normalised* behaviour and interest, as well as downgrade confidence that a high-degree of *continuity* with wider, pre-unification tendencies, exists in the context of this specific case.

Although this thesis was temporally limited to the period of time between unification and the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA, events transpiring following the U.S. withdrawal are particularly revealing, and highly consistent in this regard. Germany has not only continued to assertively pursue its economic interests with Iran, including through implementation of an Instrument in Support of Trade Exchange (INSTX) mechanism, but it has further articulated a clear rejection of Washington's "maximum pressure" strategy against Iran, while reiterating its personal commitment to diplomatic solutions. In this manner, not only does the future of Germany's bilateral relations toward Iran appear consistent with post-unification behaviour to date, but intensification of Germany's bilateral level of engagement appears increasingly likely, as the diplomatic landscape in Europe stands to be altered with the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union. With such a change to existing multilateral avenues of Germany's engagement with Iran, and continued disagreement between Berlin and Washington regarding underlying strategy, Germany will likely continue its clear articulation and pursuit of subjective interests vis-à-vis Iran, rather than solely relying on the guise of multilateralism in furtherance of its goals. In this sense, Germany's relationship with Iran continues to underscore a more normalised disposition on the part of Germany, and in turn, it

highlights the diminished relevancy of wider, civilian power features, in explaining a particular case of German foreign policy.

Recognition of this wider relevance is of particular significance. Prior to consideration of the bilateral relationship from this original, and essential, civilian power theoretical perspective, the relationship was not only under-evaluated, as well as contradictory, but ambivalent towards much of its wider implications. By looking at this relationship from the original perspective of expected behaviour and interests underlying post-unification Germany, this thesis not only makes a significant and original contribution to knowledge by more effectively explaining the relationship, and the importance of apparent contradictions to assumed behaviour, but in doing so, it allows for the impact of this case study to extend beyond the scope of Germany's relationship with Iran alone. Although this thesis acknowledges one cannot extrapolate the findings of a single-case study to all other cases, and is in this sense limited, the manner in which such an explanation of Germany's interest in relations with Iran serves to challenge many prevailing assumptions, nevertheless evidences a critical instance of post-unification German foreign policy and interest, occurring beyond prevailing explanations of civilian power tendencies, and continuity in post-unification Germany. In doing so, this case study of Germany's relationship with Iran casts German foreign policy, identity, and interest, in a different light, in which although aspects of continuity may exist, the scope of such continuity may be far more limited than presently accepted.

Civilian power explanations of German foreign policy, identity, and interest, continue to face a myriad of potential challenges, and questions over its enduring relevance remain paramount. Domestically, Germany has witnessed an intensification of anti-status quo political movements –such as the far-right political party Alternative für Deutschland– and increasingly struggled with questions regarding its foreign policy interests in a multilateral, or supranational setting, amidst potentially changing features of German identity and interest. In a wider, international context, Germany has both witnessed calls for it to assume a more prominent role in defence of the rules-based international order, as well as faced growing resistance from other European Union countries regarding its subjective foreign policy

ambitions. Accordingly, the question of Germany's orientation in foreign policy remains imperative and implicative in a much wider context.

Amidst such dynamics and questions, however, Germany has continued to exhibit both a determination to pursue its subjective economic interests in the face of international resistance –such as its prominent lamenting of sanctions relating to the Nord Stream 2 pipeline– and conveyed a strong commitment to diplomatic solutions to international conflict. Accordingly, in the midst of questions regarding Germany's orientation in foreign policy, it is insightful to consider many of these wider features of Germany's present foreign policy behaviour, and interest, appear to mirror its behaviour and interest in the context of this discrete case study of German foreign policy toward Iran.

In this manner, this thesis not only offers an original, and valuable contribution to a growing body of literature addressing fundamental questions of Germany's present, and future foreign policy disposition, but it encourages further case studies along these lines in the context of other relationships as well. Since this is but one case study, among many different relationships for Germany, the findings of this thesis are inherently limited. However, what this intrinsic limitation indicates, is the particular value further research from such a perspective offers, given similar cases may suggest a necessary reconsideration in scope, of assumed continuity in post-unification German foreign policy, identity, and interest, as a civilian power.

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